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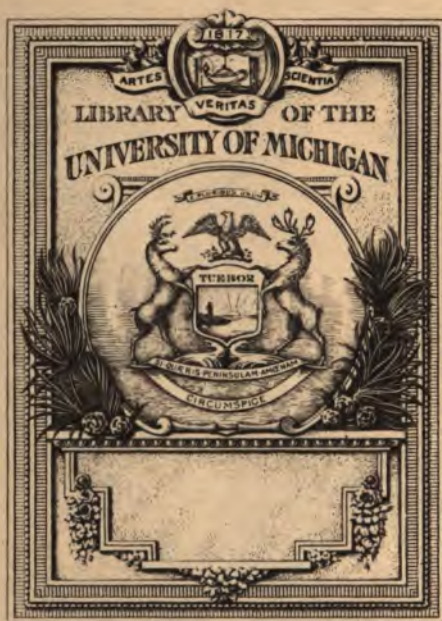
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LONDON:
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY and HENRY FLETCHER,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

DEDICATION

TO

PROFESSOR OWEN, F.R.S.

ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR SIR,

A FEW months ago our friend, Dr. Southwood Smith, in speaking of you, remarked, "That *one* head contains all that is known of physiology up to the present time."

When it is considered how immense a field of direct and complicated phenomena such knowledge involves, each department being more than enough for any man's life, who would search it through all its remotest bearings,—the thought may occur to many persons that I

should apologize for associating your name with the present little work, which only pretends to give a romantic account of science, in illustrating the different character of vision in different creatures. But, knowing, as I do, that your largeness of mind, in the enormous accumulation of facts of Natural History, has even extended itself to those shadowy and mysterious boundaries, where fact and experiment, being unable to proceed a degree further, may permit you to listen with no half-averted ear to the possible revelations of a "reasoning imagination," I cannot but feel, without relying upon personal friendship as my excuse, that Philosophy herself may not only pardon, but rather encourage me to place the present novel attempt under your protection.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

THE AUTHOR.

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THE

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POOR ARTIST;

OR,

SEVEN EYE-SIGHTS AND ONE OBJECT.

"SCIENCE IN FABLE."



London :

JOHN VAN VOORST, PATERNOSTER ROW.

M.D.CCC.L.

portion of our seemingly short life, may endure long after the hand that called them out of darkness into the light, has crumbled into dust; and in that consciousness an artist's life is lengthened by his sense of immortality. But paint and canvas, paper and print, food, clothing, and shelter, are meanwhile necessary, since no work can be done without them; and these are our greatest difficulty. These are the things that constantly try to pull us down. Yes; these small matters are serious considerations to all poor artists. We must have the materials for art-life, and for mortal life. Of all such I shall soon be exhausted; and then I must leave these bright green woods and mossy banks, and away to the busy town to sell my pictures, and succeed in my love, if good fortune will so far bless me!"

The Poor Artist, who had just made this speech to himself, sitting at the foot of an old tree, in a lovely green wood, had lodgings hard by, at a little farmhouse; and this was his previous history:—

He had been left an orphan, without fortune and without friends, but having a natural taste for drawing, he engaged himself for a certain number of years to a landscape-painter, from whom he gained the requisite instruction. Long after the period of his engagement had expired, he continued to paint, for his support, the back-grounds, and sometimes even considerable portions of his master's pictures. Eventually he painted entire landscapes, all of which were sold at good prices, as the production of his master.

Now, although it is very true that his

salary had been somewhat increased of late, still our Poor Artist began to feel that it was not good for man to live by bread alone, and that since his paintings were sufficiently well executed to pass as the work of a recognised artist, it was evident that he was now qualified to gain an independent living for himself, and also to earn reputation for his own name.

Once possessed by this feeling, the consequences were natural. He soon left his instructor, and commenced landscape-painter on his own account. But his astonishment was very great when he found that nobody would purchase his pictures. He even offered some to the same patrons and picture-dealers who had bought landscapes fresh from his own easel, which had passed as the work of his master. But they would scarcely look at them. On begging

that some little attention might be given to his productions, he was told after a casual glance, that they were promising enough as the work of a young artist, but that of course nobody would think of purchasing such crude sketches. This was too hard to bear, and the proper reply too obvious to be repressed. To confound them at once, he informed them that the pictures they had last purchased were the entire work of his hands! A resentful silence—a lowering brow—an evasive laugh—a gesticulation of vexation or impatience—were about the only effects produced by this explanation. Argument only made the matter worse.

“But they *passed* under your master’s name,” said one person.

“To be sure they did!” exclaimed our young friend, brightening up.

“Ah, that’s it,” said the other, with a shrewd look. “His *name* sold them.”

It very soon became evident to the Poor Artist that to gain a respectable living and position in the world, something more was requisite than to do a thing well. You must also have a *name*. Some sort of a living, it is true, sufficient to keep the body and soul together in their ordinary relations of existence on the earth—not one here, and the other up there—can always be obtained in a civilized community by any one who has a real talent of a kind that is in general request. He might daub ale-house signs; imitate Pomona oak for the church-warden’s door; paint the three poplars in front of the village lawyer’s house, with his wife and two dogs sitting beneath them; just as a poet might write love-songs and valentines for farmer’s daughters

and servant-maids, or sing his ballads in the streets, if he had a good voice not liable to be much affected by the weather. No one who can do such things as these is absolutely compelled to starve. For the willing mind, and the skilful hand there is always enough—to eat.

“ For good skill and will,
There’s bread—and the rill.”

But this is not the question:—eating and drinking, be it bread and water, or beef and ale, are not the only things desired by a man who feels that he has also a soul. Nor are they sufficient for one who desires to have his rightful position in society. How then is this to be obtained? By having industry and acquiring skill. Well, both of these our artist possessed. The next thing that naturally followed was to find employ-

ment for these, and turn them to profitable account. But in order to do this our young friend found to his dismay! that in the absence of all connexion or patronage, it was first requisite to make a name.

How to effect this, our Poor Artist had no idea. However, he worked early and late; and as he now and then managed to sell a picture at about a twentieth part of the price it would have produced had it been thought to proceed from his master's pencil, he was able to live and continue his efforts. Still, no prospect of any better condition opened upon him, and he was beginning to despond, when one day he chanced to read an article in a local paper, written by a young gentleman of seventeen, the nephew of the pro-

prietor, in which these encouraging words occurred:—

“We have never coincided in the hackneyed and maudlin talk about the poverty and sufferings of genius. All our experience convinces us that it is a libel on a generous public and the world at large, which is always competent and anxious to discover and reward real merit. Genius, sooner or later, is sure to work its way to fame and fortune.”

The Poor Artist leaped for joy. He felt it was true. The words of the youthful sage of the local newspaper had inspired him with fresh life. “Yes!” exclaimed he; “my master was acknowledged to be a genius; and as I have painted half his pictures during the last two years, and nobody doubted them to be his, I also must have some touch of

genius. Sooner or later I shall gain a name, and have a right position in the world. The only thing I fear, rests in the word 'later;'—sooner, or *later*. However, I am young now, and have plenty of time before me."

So our Poor Artist fell to work with renewed vigour, and a hopeful heart. He exceeded his own expectations for a few weeks, and was actually on one occasion within a shade of getting a commission to paint a large landscape of a park, with deer in the foreground—a waterfall amidst fir-trees, for the half-distance—a gothic bridge, with a waggon going over it, for the distance—and permission, if it did not increase the expense, to put a sky-distance beyond that. As it was found, however, that he could not afford so large a canvas and stretcher without

some small advance of the promised sum, they saw at once that he was but a poor painter, quite unequal to such a picture. All confidence was destroyed, and the proposals were naturally withdrawn.

But the friendless Artist having already expended some time and money in making the preliminary arrangements and studies, besides that his mind was now set on the design, thought he would make a bold effort for a great success, which should be to his own honour and profit, and show the rich gentleman the narrow-minded injustice that had been done to a deserving hand. He accordingly, by dint of many promises and bonds, contrived to borrow the necessary sum to enable him to paint this large picture. It took him longer than he had expected, so that he was obliged to live on very meagre

fare indeed, during the last three or four weeks. At length, however, all was done; he had it put in a tolerably handsome frame; hired a large room; and expended his last guinea in advertising and announcing the picture for exhibition. He calculated that the proceeds of the first three days would pay all his chief expences, or, at any rate, enable him to meet all immediate demands.

The morning arrived—the hour struck—the doors were opened.

Hour after hour passed. Not a single visitor presented himself. The Poor Artist walked up and down the vacant room in front of his picture, listening to every sound. But nobody came. He turned sick at heart. People no doubt thought it too much to pay a shilling just to look at a picture. But then he saw them

flock all the morning to an exhibition in the next street of "The Whistling Oyster!"

The ensuing day was the same. Nobody came; except that, towards the afternoon, one of his creditors looked in at the door, and shook his head.

The third day was the same. On the fourth, his creditors seized on all he possessed—picture included. They said, "An artist who had no name was rightly served for his presumption in taking such a step." So, the Poor Artist being quite ruined, was obliged to leave the town.

"Genius," said he, as he sat himself down by the road-side, "is sure to work its way to fame and fortune,—sooner or later. In *my* case it seems evident that it will not be soon, but late,—if ever."

He had just been enabled, through the kindness of a brother artist, who had a considerable trade in the flattering-likeness line of business, to make up a travelling pack with painting-materials; so he set forth as an itinerant painter, to try if the winds of heaven would help him.

He painted landscapes on the panels of summer-houses and billiard-rooms in the houses of rich county families; Italian scenery and Swiss mountains for tea-gardens and dancing-rooms; and gothic arches, with a lady followed by an Italian greyhound, passing underneath; or other things of the kind, for the fair dames of various rural mansions. Sometimes his necessities compelled him to paint far inferior scenes to these; and on one occasion, an old lady required

him to paint an exact likeness of her green-house. It was literally a green-house,—green all over, with a large red chimney-pot, and red geraniums staring through nearly all the windows from top to bottom. As he happened to have enough in his pocket to enable him to live for a day or two without further need, he was about to decline this horrid job, when there came tripping behind the ancient furbelowed dame, a very young lady in a morning dress of white muslin, whose soft eyes were half shaded by flowing chestnut locks.

“He does not seem disposed to undertake my green-house,” said the old lady, rather testily, and walking away.

“Ah! *do* paint dear grandmamma’s green-house?” said the young lady, in a sweet voice with as sweet a smile.

“Madam,” said the Artist, with a respectful bow, and not without some trepidation, “I shall have the greatest pleasure in painting the green-house.”

The old lady returned; the matter was quickly arranged, and to work went the Artist.

Presuming that the old lady had some taste in painting, not to speak of the taste of her sweet grand-daughter, the great aim of our poor friend was to make a sightly picture of a very unsightly subject. He accordingly threw a large portion of the green-house into a warm deep shade,—placed a picturesque cloud just behind the ugly red chimney, so as to modify its colour, and destroy the effect of its outline,—while a gleam of sunshine turned a portion of the glass to fiery gold,—and right in front, he placed the old

lady and her grand-daughter in conversation with the gardener.

"How very good it is!" exclaimed the young lady, directly she looked at it; and away she ran to bring her grandmamma.

The old lady put on her spectacles,—gave one stare, and suddenly lifted up both her hands. "I should never have known it!" exclaimed she. "My geraniums are all lost, and my green-house has changed colour!"

The luckless Artist changed colour too. He saw his mistake too late.

"Perhaps," said the young lady, "this gentleman would not mind painting you another. He paints so very quickly."

"Oh, by all means," said the Artist.

"I do not want fancies and things," said the old lady, raising one finger: "what I want is my green-house."

“A reality-picture, Madam. Oh yes, I perfectly understand.”

Again the Artist went to work. He assiduously painted three or four different pictures of the green-house, the young lady continually inspecting the work; but in his copy of the reality there was always some one thing not quite right, or omitted altogether. As he did not, however, mind painting more pictures, the young lady became much amused with this difficulty. Already the seventh sketch was upon his easel. Meantime the private portfolio, where the Artist kept all his choice sketches, made to please himself, and not to sell, was opened for Aurelia's inspection.

“Oh, *how* beautiful!” exclaimed she. “It is impossible to say, or indeed to know, which one most admires, all

are so natural,—so pastoral,—so very lovely.”

“*Do* you think so!” cried the Poor Artist; “you make me only too happy!” And then he sighed, for he thought it would soon be time to go away. Sooth to say, the ninth sketch of the dear convenient old green-house was now in hand.

“Your landscapes have so sweet an air about them,” said Aurelia, “that it makes one quite long to walk in such scenery. How delightful to be alone in those soft woodlands and winding lanes!”

“Or,” added the Artist, looking another way, “or, if not entirely alone—” There he stopped. He was so dreadfully afraid that he had gone too far.

As for the landscape-sketches which Aurelia had so very much admired, it

was only natural that the Artist should beg of her—he could hardly do otherwise—to accept them from him. And as for the young lady, she received them with the prettiest blush imaginable; and soon afterwards he saw her coming towards him with a little book in her hand, most elegantly bound. It was a copy of *La Fontaine's Fables*, which she requested he would keep for her sake. The Artist bowed over the little book, almost pressing it to his heart. He had an impulse to press it to his lips; however, he did not venture to do that.

Three days more passed, during which, as the weather was rainy, the old lady requested the Artist to give Aurelia a few lessons in landscape-drawing. When her hand grew tired, they read *La Fontaine's Fables* together.

One of these fables became an especial favorite; it was that of "The Two Doves," which Aurelia observed was almost the only beautiful story in the work, though the Fables were full of every other merit. It was like love in a wilderness.

"But, oh, how delightful," sighed the Artist "to have lived in those times when creatures of all kinds had the gift of language; though even now, there are many things which are intelligible without words." Aurelia smiled and coloured, and looked, as our Artist thought, the very picture of Happiness,—but she made no other reply.

On the fourth of these delicious days, Aurelia's uncle returned. He was a large man with a red face and a strong voice; he wore a green velvet waistcoat; had his hair powdered in the old style; and

carried a great emerald-headed cane. He gave a hasty glance at the nine or ten sketches of the green-house; and then he looked at the Poor Artist.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNCLE WHO WAS WORLDLY-WISE, AND BOLD.—HOW
TO MAKE A NAME, OFF-HAND. — THE FIVE FINISHED
PICTURES.—THE FLAME OF HOPE, MET BY THE SMOKE
OF DISASTER.

“I see what has happened!” said the Uncle, in an angry voice.

The old lady was all amazement. She had never dreamed that anything was “happening!” The alarming Uncle took Aurelia aside. There was no help for her; and with many blushes she confessed the state of her heart. He then took the Poor Artist aside.

“Now, sir,” said he, “what reparation can you possibly make for the domestic

mischievous you have done? My niece confesses that you have had the wickedness to make her an offer of marriage. But she has no fortune, unless she marries with my consent. And I should be mad to give that to a Poor Artist like you. No, sir. Good morning, sir."

The disconsolate Artist went his way. It was a heavy day for him.

He had not walked above a mile before the Uncle came riding after him.

"I have spoken once more with my niece," said he. "She is a very foolish young girl. Ahem! I do not wish to be a tyrant; no, I only wish to act rationally. I am a philosopher of The World as it *is*, and must *remain*. I exact accordingly, and can also make allowances. If, instead of wandering about the country in this way, you will go to some town

or city, and work,—paint a good picture, and exhibit it, and gain some reputation,—in fact, make a *name*, then you can return here, and if my niece remains in the same mind about you, we may think of it.”

“Ah, sir,” said the Artist, “you are very good, but you don’t know—” He felt it was of no use to explain.

“Don’t know!” cried the Uncle. “I know quite enough. Go, I repeat it; and make a name. If I were a young fellow in your circumstances, I would soon make a name, I’ll answer for it!”

“Oh how, sir?” asked the Poor Artist, earnestly. “And of what *sort*?”

“Of a capital sort, to be sure!” shouted the Uncle. “I would astonish—that’s the point—I would astonish people. I would paint something that the eye of man had never before seen.”

"Then perhaps nobody would understand it," said the Artist, innocently.

"Pooh! what has understanding to do with the matter, so that people are astonished? Mankind are not led by their understandings, but by what they do *not* understand. The world will run after any *ignis fatuus*; but no man will run after a wax taper, though it be carried by a prophet. I say you must astonish—astound—confound! Understanding is the destruction of astonishment. When people know all about things, wonder ceases. Yes, yes. Go and paint something perfectly wonderful—incredible; something, I say, which the eye of man has never yet seen,—and *that* will gain you a name."

So saying the Uncle slipped a sealed packet into his hand, and rode away. Enclosed were twenty guineas, enveloped in

a hasty scrawl, to the effect that they were in payment for his nine green-house pictures.

The Artist proceeded on his way with a light step, for he had now become a lover, and moreover he saw that he might one day possess his beautiful Aurelia. The only thing he had to do was to get a name as a painter, and all the rest would follow. But how was this to be done? As for what Aurelia's uncle had said about painting something that the eye of man had never seen before, that was mere extravagance. The obvious course was to paint a number of pictures on very interesting popular subjects, in his best style, and with his highest finish, and try to dispose of them, or get them exhibited in good situations. Recollecting a beautiful part of the country at some

fifty miles' distance, he straightway betook himself there, and having fixed his residence at a little farm-house, fell to work with the utmost zeal.

He had been at this place upwards of seven months at the time the story commences, and had finished five most lovely landscape pictures, besides a great number of sketches. We have heard the soliloquy he made in the wood at the opening of this little narrative. His state of mind may be pretty well collected from that, and the few words he now uttered as he rose from the bank, and began to pace slowly homeward.

“My large picture must surely prove attractive. The Willow-tree at sunrise in the fore-ground, with the water seen glittering underneath and between its long drooping boughs, was a happy thought.

The effect of the sky-distance, with the fading moon, that looks like a spot of cloud, is very beautiful. I hope the public will think so."

"My Windmill on the downs, with the flock of sheep coming over the hill, would make a charming picture for a bright dining-room. And what a lovely thing is my 'Lady of the woods,' with her dove's eyes, her soft, tanned, apricot cheek, her rich chestnut locks!—very like Aurelia she certainly is. A sweet cabinet picture. Oh, I *must* succeed! I shall be recognized—I shall make a name—and I shall obtain Aurelia."

He quickened his pace, and soon reached the plantation bordering the farm-meadow. He had been out in the woods and fields since daybreak. He longed again to look at his finished pictures.

These five pictures, on which all his future hopes rested, were finished, except a little varnishing; and as all his money was now expended, he had fixed his departure for the beginning of the week. He had only reserved just enough to pay for his lodgings, and the expenses of his journey to the great town, where he expected to re-appear like a star from a suddenly opening cloud. Money then would come in fast enough. He should soon invite Aurelia, with her uncle and grand-mamma, to drive across the country to see his pictures before they were all sold!

But where is the little farm-house? Alas for human speculations and human hopes! What is all this smoke and smother! this heap of black ashes, and fallen rafters, and smutty tiles and bricks? And

all this since he went out in the morning! The pictures! Oh, heaven and earth!

The farmer, all over smoke and black straws, with his hands shockingly burnt, came running to him, followed by his wife and children in burnt tatters.

“But my pictures!”

All speaking and crying together, they began to tell of the hay-rick taking fire,—then the barn,—then the dairy,—then the farm-house.

“But my pictures—the Windmill—the Willow?”

The cow had been burnt, and the calf, **with** the **hay**! All the geese had flown **into** the fire; the horse was drowned; and **the** pigeons (they meant sacks of oats) had been burnt in the market cart, while nineteen sacks of oats (they meant

pigeons) had flown away like mad things, no one knew whither!

“But my pictures? my Willow-tree—my Windmill—all my hopes!”

The clock—and the new churn,—and all the Sunday-clothes in the closet!

“My pictures! my pictures! Oh, I see what has befallen me! Not a single one—has not *one* of my pictures been saved?”

Nothing—all had been burnt. Among those heaps of black ashes and wood, and rubbish, and smoke, lay all the possessions and hopes of the poor farmer, and the Poor Artist.

How little did the young and joyous heart of Aurelia dream what her lover was suffering. She looked every day at the nine sketches of the dear old greenhouse; and every night when she went

up to her bed-room, she looked at the beautiful landscape-sketches he had given her, and kissed them before she said her prayers,—and once more just before putting out the light.

Without the means of paying the farmer what he owed him; without a shilling in his purse to enable him to travel to the town, where he was known to a few people,—this town being fifty miles distant,—having nothing but his sketching-materials which he had carried out with him in the morning,—what was the Artist to do? Only one thing presented itself to his despairing mind. He must go forth into the woodlands, and make a few hasty sketches, and by selling them for any trifle they would bring, he might thus be enabled to plod his melancholy way from village to village, till he ar-

rived at the large town. And then! oh, it was too shocking, too heart-breaking to think of! All his five finished pictures—and all his exquisite little sketches too—“all his little ones”—nothing left of all his art-family!

But life is life, and the world-struggles must be gone through. So he took leave of the burnt-out farmer, and his wife and children, all of them shedding tears, and hoping to meet again some day, here or in Heaven.

When he got into the wood he sat down. He unpacked his sketching-box—aid a piece of canvas before him—looked at his colours and palette—then at his brushes—then at the peeps of landscape in front of him. But he gave it up with a deep sigh, and two or three scalding tears trickled down his cheek. He could not work.

Finding himself so depressed, he took out the dear little volume of *La Fontaine's Fables* from his pocket,—kissed it devoutly, and began to read. He read on, and at last began to lose the heavy sense of his misfortunes, and finally he quite forgot them. He had fallen asleep.

CHAPTER III.

LA FONTAINE'S FABLES REALIZED. — DIALOGUE WITH A
HONEY-BEE. — OF SIMPLE EYES, AND COMPOUND EYES,
OR WHO SEES REALITY.

THE green foliage of the trees and shrubs bowed softly and gracefully around the sleeping Artist, as though to do him honour, and in tender recognition of his services to Nature and to themselves. The light was subdued by the passage of some dark blue and grey clouds overhead; but the air was warm, and the singing of the gnats, mingled with the distant sheep-bells, and the occasional voice of a stock-dove, made a pleasant woodland sound.

Whether the sleeper heard any of this, is uncertain; or if he heard it at all, it was only in the half-conscious way which gives such a charm to a nap in a green wood. At these times the inventive faculties seem perfectly quiescent, but able to enjoy with delicious indolence the great inventive Dream of Nature which surrounds them.

In this half-wakeful condition, the Artist became aware of a sound more distinct than the rest, which from time to time mingled with the hum of the gnats, and then rose above it. Presently it seemed to become articulate. He could almost fancy it uttered words. Yes—it surely must be so. What was that? It was certainly a sort of humming voice that said something.

The Artist listened more attentively,

and almost holding his breath, but still without opening his eyes. And the voice said in a low sonorous murmur,—

“ Busy—busy—buzzing brain,
Use your hands, or nothing gain.”

The Artist lay quiet a few seconds, listening intently with his eyes still closed. All was silent. He then softly raised himself, and looked round on all sides. Presently he saw a leaf tremble—then another—then the cup of a flower shake very much—and notwithstanding a great bustling and buzzing inside, he was yet able to distinguish words amidst the low humming monotony of the undersong. The words were the same as before,—

“ Busy—busy—buzzing brain,
Use your hands, or nothing gain.”

It came from the inside of that flower-cup that was shaking so! Yes—there

could be no doubt of it. The flower now shook and nodded more than ever, and with a bustling and fussing noise of voice and of wings, up came the head and shoulders of a Bee! She held fast upon the upper rim of the cup, with her strong arms bent over, and stared wisely at the Artist with her two dark horny eyes.

“Can it be possible,” ejaculated the Artist, “that I heard you speak!—is it really granted to me, the most favoured of modern men, to hear a honey-bee discourse in a tone intelligible to human organs?” The Bee continued looking at him without changing her attitude. “Was I mistaken!” exclaimed the Artist, “surely I heard a voice from the inside of that flower-cup, and that voice was—was—it surely was—”

“Wuz—wuz—wu-u-u-zz!” buzzed the Bee. She ceased abruptly. A silence ensued, in which they both continued looking at each other.

“Most wonderful!” at length ejaculated the Artist. It must have been you who sang those words. Why do you sing no more? Speak again! Why do you continue lounging on your elbows over the white parapet of that convolulus, and staring down at me, holding your antennæ bolt upright in the air? No answer! Well—here I will remain as long as you. Obstinate as you may be, you shall find I am a man of inexhaustible patience.”

“Uz!—uz!” hummed the Bee, and gave her antennæ a twirl.

“No,” said the Artist, humbly, “I am not the man of Uz.”

He could not help smiling at his own tolerably far-fetched pleasantry, but seeing the Bee bend one of her antennæ down at him in a very grave and pointed manner, his face became equally serious, and he listened with all his senses, in expectation of further words. Nor was he disappointed.

“Upright thing!” murmured the Bee, “why do you not unfold your wings, and seek for honey of such kind as suits your strange nature?”

The Artist stepped back several paces, in some trepidation, not unmingled with awe at this unexpected address. Recovering himself, however, and fortifying himself with recollections of *La Fontaine*,—

“Madam,” said he, “I stand upright because it would give me a pain in my

back if I remained long in your attitude ; and the reason why I do not unfold my wings, is simply because I do not possess any."

"I understand," replied the Bee ; "you are of the earth-walking species. I know enough of you. But having no wings is not an excuse for idleness." And as if to show her impatience at all inactivity, the Bee set her wings in motion with so rapid a vibration that the convolvulus seemed as if it would be shaken all to pieces with it.

"Alas for ill fortune!" sighed the Artist, "it is not idleness that causes me to stand or sit here doing no work ; but the fruitlessness of my labours."

"How can labour, rightly applied, be fruitless?" responded the Bee ; "I never found it so."

"Industrious little personage," said the Artist, "I rejoice in your happy lot; mine is different."

"What is it?" asked the Bee. "And what is the nature of your work?"

"I paint pictures of things that we see; but nobody buys them."

"Why should they, if they can see the same things for themselves?"

"Yes; but they cannot carry the things about with them as they are seen in Nature; nor do natural things always endure very long. Sometimes a very little while—as in the case of clouds and colours, or the foliage in a landscape."

"I discern some sense in what you say," replied the Bee. "But why do not creatures of your sort buy these pictures?"

"Because I have no great reputation

for painting them," answered the Artist; "no name."

"But if you *can* paint them well," said the Bee, "then you are sure of the reputation and the name."

"Yes, if I can live upon nothing for a good many years; but there's the bitter difficulty. And one gets neither younger nor merrier, under hard work and no honey."

"In our communities," said the Bee, "we have little experience of these vexatious trials. We are creatures, you know, of more reason and fewer words than your species. We are far more practical. You deceive yourselves and each other by fine sayings. However, to cut short this talk, which is waste of time, answer me this,—do you want work?"

"That I do!" exclaimed the Artist,

“provided I can get something by it.”

“Of course,” said the Bee; “you shall get honey. That is an understood thing. Very well then, I will find you work.” And herewith she gave her antennæ a flourish, and then crossed them over her nose.

“What does that mean?” inquired the Artist eagerly, and, lamenting his ignorance of the antennæ language, “What is the subject you propose?”

“Something which I have seen this morning in the woods, of a kind which is quite new to me, and therefore I should like to have its picture; because, as you justly remark, it may not last long, and such another may never appear again.”

“Where is it?” said the Artist.

“Here,” replied the Bee pointing to her eyes. “I saw it, and shall now describe what I saw, and still see here.”

The Artist, with an amused yet interested expression, got out his sketching-materials; arranged his colours and brushes; and placed a piece of canvas, ready stretched, before him.

The Bee now proceeded with a description of a most extraordinary and incoherent kind. So, at least, it appeared to the Artist. There was an account of a large flat hexagonal figure, the lines of each angle being set with bright lights of reddish brown and gold. There was a transparent honey-coloured drop, of the size commonly met with upon the leaves of opening flowers in the early morning; and beyond this, and seen through it, there was a shape, which the Bee de-

scribed in the air with one of her antennæ (thus, V), and next to it another (thus, I), and the surface of both was rough and full of little holes.

The Artist, with rather a dismayed and despairing look, made certain lines and colours on his canvas, and then added the figure described as VI, wondering what in the world the Bee could have seen in the wood which should suggest the Roman numerals for six to her architectural mind; unless, indeed, it were the unconscious influence of the hexagonal shape of her honey-cylinders, or of the hexagonal lenses of her two compound eyes.

The Bee proceeded, and described to the Artist—that in progressing along the inner rim of the object, she had seen similar figures inverted, and she made

them with one of her antennæ as before, thus, I' A.

“What!” ejaculated the Artist, to himself, “is she now going to write Greek! will she ask me to paint some old decayed half-obliterated inscription stone, like one of those in the British Museum! Oh this will never do. The public will never understand it.” He threw down his brush in despair.

“Why do you not go on?” droned the Bee, in a deep angry tone.

“Because the thing you ask me to paint, is unintelligible,—something which the eye of man never saw!”

As the Artist uttered these words he suddenly bethought himself of the exhortation of Aurelia's uncle; so he added, in a deprecatory voice, “If you would only try to accommodate yourself a little

more to the difference which exists between my eyes and yours, I might yet be able to do a little something."

"I suppose," said the Bee, "you see all things as upright and round-about."

"By no means," replied the Artist; "we see things of the shape they really are."

"How many eyes have you got?" demanded the Bee. "I see only two in your face. You have no doubt others on the top of your head, as I have, or others elsewhere."

"No," replied the Artist, beginning to hesitate. "No, I have only two simple eyes."

"Then," said the Bee, "you must be a very arrogant, or a very ignorant creature. For how should you,"—here she raised one of her antennæ, and moved

it slowly up and down, as if laying down the law,—“how should you see everything as it is, unless you had the eyes of all other creatures, who see it according to every variety suitable to its nature with relation to their own natures; or unless your two eyes, instead of being of a simple kind, as you say they are, should be compounded of the powers of all other eyes?”

“So I consider them to be,” said the Artist; “all the wonders of others being thus reduced to a simple action. Moreover, we do not regard external objects as dependent on *how* we see them, or what shape and colour we see them. — They are something of themselves, whatever they may appear to different visions.”

“And you believe, then, that you see

what that something really is ; all other visions being naturally deceived ; all other creatures dwelling therefore in systematic illusion ? ”

The Artist considered for some time, and at last said,—

“ Yes. The prerogative of actuality is given to the eyesight of man.”

“ Who told you so ? ” demanded the Bee.

“ My own reason,” answered the Artist.

“ Self-love’s gravest flatterer,” replied the Bee. “ We, of the Bee species, say the same thing,—and truly. But no more words. Will you try and paint the picture I shall describe to you ? If it be something which the eye of man never beheld before, all the better for you. It will enlarge your experience, and stimulate your intellect and imagination.”

Thus admonished and exhorted—and with especial effect, were it only for the words, which were a “remarkable coincidence” in their application to the counsel so brusquely administered by Aurelia’s uncle,—our Artist again took up his brush, and begging the industrious philosopher to do all she possibly could to make her description intelligible to ordinary human senses, he again fell to work.

After many efforts at a mutual understanding, something like the following description was educed.

A broken and irregular line of gold formed a large disk, from which hung, on the inside, a row of golden lamps, with flame lamps between each, or conjointly. This was on one half of the disk,—on the other, the outline was beset with umber-shaded golden holes, pits, or

caves, bordering upon an aërial field of sober twilight azure. The Artist, therefore, presently converted his sketch into a design for the outskirts of the Gardens of the Hesperides.

Of course he said nothing about this to the Bee, who might not have heard of these gardens, or if she had, would probably have disapproved of such a use being made of her description of an object she had just seen in the woods.

The Artist put down his palette, and leaned back with his head on one side, and considered his design on the easel with an amused and somewhat self-complacent expression.

“Now,” buzzed the Bee, in a loud tone, “let me look at my picture!” Whereupon she began to make a great stir and bustle in balancing herself on

the swaying edge of the convolvulus, and prepared to take flight towards the Artist.

But she stopped suddenly on observing the Artist turn the face of the picture downwards.

"Turn it up again," said the Bee, with an angry buzzing of the wings.

"You must excuse me," said the Artist.

"Am I to come under, and see it from the shade, with my three uppermost eyes?" inquired the Bee, in a tone of reproof. "Why do you turn it towards the ground? Don't you know that my three simple eyes for ascending, are always used to seek the light, and I shall only knock my head against your fine performance."

The Artist now explained that he did

this out of no bad or blundering intention, but solely because he had found it necessary to decline showing sketches of pictures to any sitter, or other person who was not an artist. They were apt to run away with wrong impressions, which were injurious. He meant nothing disrespectful. Bees were great artists, no doubt, but in a different way.

The Bee expressed herself much astonished at this hesitation. She said there was no sound reason in it. If the work were rightly begun, she argued, there was just the same credit due to the frame-work as the finishing. And as to judgment, who could form so good a one as she who gave directions for the thing she wanted to be built or painted? She was beginning to get seriously angry, when there was heard a very small

hoarse voice from a little heap of fine dust and sandy mould close to the Artist's foot, which said—

“I have heard all. I also will have a picture. I have seen a new thing this morning.”

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTAIN MANDIBLE.—HIS WILD DESCRIPTION OF A PITCHED
BATTLE BETWEEN ANT-ARMIES.

THE speaker was one of the valiant tribe of Red Ants. He belonged to the war-department of his community. While yet speaking, the little warrior in the shining brown cuirass and helmet, ran up the Artist's leg—over his shoulder—(looking into his ear by the way)—down his arm—across his hand—up his painting-brush—from the tip-top of which he threw himself down headlong to the Artist's knee, whence he rapidly ascended the outside of a fresh bit of canvas on

a stretcher, which the Artist had mechanically taken in his hand—and there he remained with his little hard jaws open—waiting a reply.

The Artist, notwithstanding all that had just passed between himself and the Bee, was almost as much taken by surprise in the present instance, as though no previous experience had proved him to be one of those few favoured individuals who inherit the honours of *La Fontaine*. Recovering himself, however, he entered upon the subject; and, all preliminaries being adjusted after the dashing off-hand manner of the little individual in the brown armour, the Artist prepared to make his sketch.

But he soon threw down his brush. Partly from the small warrior's rapidity of utterance, accompanied with all sorts

of vehement kicks and contortions, tugs and twists, and other confusing gesticulations; but yet more from the accumulation of known and unknown things, actions and purposes, which he described, — to say nothing of measuring distances by so many tens and hundreds of leg-runs, — the Artist saw the thing was impossible. He sank back, and pressed his forehead with one hand.

But the Ant was not to be put off, evaded, or denied, by any such word as “impossible.” He said nothing was impossible to valour and perseverance, if there were common sense in the undertaking. So he tried again and again to make all clear, being gravely exhorted every now and then to do so by the Bee, till at length there burst out by fits and starts, the description, like enough to

be intelligible, of a grand pitched battle between two armies upon a rough level of golden rock, or sunlit stone, wherein the combinations of ant-armies, — main-body, right and left wings, and body of reserve,—were evidently alluded to; though the description was chiefly confined to the self-devoting heroic furies of the grand *mêlée*, where the armour and the weapons, with the sun blazing down on them, seemed less fiery than the spirit that animated the combatants, as represented by their illustrious chronicler, who now, to no discordant harp, sang hoarsely the inspiring theme. But the peculiar circumstances, which seemed to have caused him to relate this battle in especial, and to wish to have it painted, were these facts: first, that the combatants were all armed with spears, swords, and javelins of fiery light,

which they were launching, hurling, and darting at one another, instead of tearing each other limb from limb with their forceps, in the natural way, like right-minded creatures; and secondly, that the whole of this scene of conflict, though a constant glistening and shining motion was upon it, never actually moved from the spot in which it was seen, and consequently neither of the armies gained a victory, but seemed to fight for ever, by fate or fortune, still unalterable.

“Done?” asked the Ant, briskly.

“The rough sketch is nearly finished,” drawled the Artist, in an under tone, leaning back with his head on one side.

“I’ll just take a run over it,” said the Ant, “to see and feel if it’s like.”

The Artist turned the sketch with its face towards the ground, and placed it

upon the other sketch which he had made from the Bee's description.

"That's very uncivil of you, sir!" said the Ant. "Am I not to examine my own picture?"

"Not in its present state," replied the Artist.

"Why not? Lift up the picture, I say!"

"I assure you I never do; it's a rule: Madam Bee can tell you the same."

"Sting my joints!" exclaimed the Ant, "but this is shameful behaviour."

The Bee now interposed, and assured Captain Mandible that she had been obliged to put up with the same refusal; but as the Artist had explained that this was only for a time, perhaps till his colours dried, she had seen some reason in waiting.

“I can discover no reason in waiting when a thing can be done at once,” said the Ant; “but here comes another inhabitant of this wood, who appears to have something to say to you of importance.”

“Where?” inquired the Artist, hastily looking round.

“Why, hanging close to your nose,” said the Ant, “and staring at you with her nine eyes,—though, now I look again, two of them squint, or see double, I don’t know which.”

CHAPTER V.

MRS. SPINSTER'S STRANGE ATTEMPT AT GRAPHIC MATHEMATICS. — THE SEVEN SLAUGHTERED HUSBANDS. — THE BRAVE BLUE-BOTTLE AND THE SPIDER.

HANGING at the lower end of a fine and almost invisible thread, attached by the upper end to the twig of a shrub which extended over his head, the Artist now observed a Spider dangling and swinging gracefully close to his cheek, and staring at him with eyes as sharp as pins.

“I have listened to all the conversation down here,” said she, “and I have observed everything with my usual attention.”

Here she ran rapidly up her line a few inches,—and then stopped.

“I have seen a more surprising Object in the woods this morning than either of you have described.”

She ran up a little higher,—and again stopped.

“I should like to have a picture of it.”

And with these words she ran, leg over leg, up her line, and ensconced herself beneath a withered leaf on a twig above, from which she peeped over at the Artist below.

“Come down and tell us what you have seen,” said the Ant; “don’t sit all of a shrug up there, peering over with your squinny eyes; but come down and tell us about it.”

“I can do that just as well up here,” said the Spider, “and if you are hard of

hearing, which is most likely, you may come and sit upon the corner of my web while I describe the object."

"Thank you," said the Ant. "*Who* killed her seventh husband yesterday morning?"

"Don't be spiteful!" interposed the Bee. "Perhaps there was a reason for it."

"So there is for everything," said the Ant; "but that does not alter a black fact."

"Will you paint for that lady?" said the Bee, turning to the Artist.

Our Artist looked first at one speaker, then at the other, thinking he had got into strange company, and had found very curious and novel patrons. The subjects for pictures which they gave him were certainly of a kind that "the eye of man had never yet seen," and, so far, quite in accordance with the advice of Aurelia's

uncle. He smiled,—took up a fresh piece of canvas,—and placing it mechanically on his easel, sat prepared to listen, and, if possible, to make some intelligible sketch.

The Spider forthwith began to discourse of a series of bright circles within circles, on a hard horizontal surface; various series of curved lines, open in some places, compact in others; some acute speculations on a globule, shot with many colours, together with many learned and incomprehensible problems founded on a figure of 8, which she had seen and examined, first with her simple eyes, one at a time, then with her compound eyes, one at a time, then with all her simple eyes at once, then with all her compound eyes at once, then with her double, or diphthong eyes, then with all her collection of eyes at the same time; and, finally, she said, with one or more

of her nine eyes, in every possible change of combination, amounting to—

“Eighty-one!” said the Ant, briskly.

“Five hundred and eleven different visions, without including all the powers of my diphthong eyes, as you call them,” said the Spider drily.

“Pray,” said the Ant, “do each of your diphthong eyes see double, or do you see three things between the two? Or do each of them possess a squinting power of three?”

The Bee here made a loop with one of her antennæ, and then thrust the other through it, at an angle of 45° .

Captain Mandible bowed, and retired a few paces.

The Artist folded his arms. “I can make nothing of all this,” said he. “If you wish me to paint a picture of any

novel object you have seen, you really must bring it a little closer home to my understanding. What am I to make of such talk as this? You should give me something like the general result of all these eyes, for my head goes round, and my sight has got confused with trying to see as you would have me."

The Ant laughed excessively at this; but the Bee wisely explained the necessity in a long droning speech, and exhorted the Spider to come down from her high mathematical abstractions, and accommodate herself to the lower and fewer visual powers of man.

Thus reproved and advised, the Spider, with rather a contemptuous tone, commenced a description, the purport of which the Artist, with no small difficulty, reduced to the following form and effect:—

A monumental slab of dull gold was the central object of the picture. It was encircled with ancient letters and numerals in *alto rilievo*, worn by time into rough breaks and honey-combs, and the surface in some places presenting a heap of straggling lines and ridges, like broken insect-legs, and which the narrator herself compared to spider-limbs after a battle between two females against thirteen males.

“*That* shows—” interrupted the Ant; but he was silenced by the Bee laying one of her antennæ on his head.

The Spider proceeded, and so did the Artist.

A bright rough band, indicated the upper edge, or furthest outskirts of the slab; while the lower, or nearest edge was formed by a semicircle of dull red

and lake-coloured golden lamps, terminating in a rough edge of light; and beyond all this, in the space of the nether air, was a surface of faint neutral tint, like a softly-shaded night.

All this was at least within the means of our Artist; but he had finally to deal with certain minute details which tested his utmost skill and precision. He was desired to paint a sort of pool, or liquid expanse, upon the slab, in which liquid was reflected what he supposed to have been a twig of some bush above it. On this dark line, or twig, he was to draw the shadow of a fly;—probably it was some bird which the Spider mistook for a fly, under the circumstances of distance and shade. Above that fly-shadow, the resemblance of a much larger one, probably a hawk. Above that, a pale azure

dome (no doubt the sky), and above that, half way up the height of this azure dome, a round speck of red fire, the size of a fly's eye, which the Artist made no doubt was the reflection of the sun's orb!

Thus do the varieties of eye-sight deal with external Nature!

Having noted down these particulars to be finished at leisure, he laid down his work, and gave a deep sigh.

"Tired?" asked the Ant.

Our Artist felt he was involved amidst incoherent wonders, and that he had most innocently allowed himself to be placed in the very dangerous position of an interpreter of natural mysteries which he did not comprehend. Still, he endeavoured to console himself with the recollection of what Aurelia's uncle had said. "If the public want something very novel

and astonishing," mused he, "something that the eye of man never before looked upon, at all events I can *now* accommodate people." He looked at his sketch—retouched it—and sat before his work with a sort of incredulous smile on his face.

The Spider now ran a little way out of her hiding-place,—stopped, as if to listen,—then dropped half way down towards the head of the Artist,—and remained there staring,—and seeming to hold her breath.

"I once saw a very strong blue-bottle fly," said the Ant, addressing the Bee; "and this loud blustering fellow bounced headlong into a spider's web. Down ran the old spider, and threw her long arms round his neck. But he fought and struggled, and blew his drone, and fuzzed, and sang sharp, and beat, and battered, and tore

the web in holes, and so got loose! The spider would not let go her hold round him; so the fly flew away with the spider; Ha! ha! ha!"

The Artist joined heartily in the laugh. It seemed as if he were destined to hear new things as well as see them.*

"Why do you insult the Spider?" said the Bee to the Ant, in a grave reproving tone. "Anecdotes of this kind are more provoking than direct attack, and are very unbecoming from one artist to another."

"She has strangled many of my comrades," said the Ant; "many heroic warriors. I have found their empty suits of armour on the ground underneath her web."

"It was a near relation of yours," said the Spider; "and now I look again, I

* This amusing fact was related to me by the well-known Naturalist, Thomas Bell, S.R.S., who witnessed it.

believe it was you yourself, who once stole half a web of mine, a new one, only made at day-break, to mix up with earth for the flooring of a gallery in your subterranean city."

"And it answered capitally," said the Ant.

"Have you said all you wish respecting your picture?" said the Bee, addressing the Spider, with a manifest wish to check the growing personalities.

"Not entirely," said the Spider. "One thing remains on my mind. The pool I mentioned was not flat, but rose in the middle. I saw things underneath it, eggs of flies, or other game, perhaps a chrysalis, which might undergo transformation some morning, if the weather kept warm. So I went round it several times with my line; enclosed it with a triangle, the

points of which I drew out acutely by lines passing over the top of the pool, and fastened to heads of flowering grass on three sides."

"Well?" said the Ant, "and what then?"

"I then went away," replied the Spider, "having no stratagem in my mind, but saying to myself,—*Who knows?*"

"So," said the Bee, thoughtfully.

"Mr. Artist!" cried the Ant; "you are now required to paint '*Who knows!*'"

"No more of this!" said the Bee.

"Oh, thief of webs!" ejaculated the Spider, dropping down a few inches by her line,—then suddenly checking herself,—
"but let him prate. I'll just drop down upon the picture, and take a scramble over it, that I may judge of its likeness to what I have described."

"Pardon me!" exclaimed the Artist;

"Your friends here will tell you that I never allow anybody to look at a picture in so very early a stage as this."

"But I might point out defects," said the Spider, "which, though easily remedied at first, would require the whole web—picture, I mean—to be demolished and worked over again if it needed to be rectified at a later stage."

"Possibly," said our Artist; "but I have found by experience that my troubles are often hopelessly multiplied, by allowing any direct interference with my intentions before they can be sufficiently intelligible to anybody but myself."

Without making any reply, the Spider quietly raised her foremost legs above her head, and began to pull herself upwards towards her retreat beneath the leaf-corner on the twig above.

CHAPTER VI.

A FISH IN A TREE. — HIS VARIOUS PORTRAITS. — THE
DRAWING IN WATER-COLOURS WHICH HE WANTED. —
IMPUDENCE OF CAPTAIN MANDIBLE.

WHILE she was ascending, the eyes of the Artist were raised, mechanically following her course, when to his surprise, not to say incredulity in his own eyesight, he perceived what seemed to him to be a Fish coming down the trunk of the tree! Head—body—fins—tail—scales! Yes, it certainly was a Fish! And coming down a tree! But how came it *up* the tree?

“My friend,” said the Ant, running

directly under the tree, and looking up towards the slowly and carefully-descending Fish, "what is your name, when you're boiled?"

"Perch," said the Fish; and, as if with the effort it cost to reply while in the act of coming down the trunk of the tree, he paused on the lowermost bough, and remained extended in the fork, with staring eyes and his mouth wide open.

The Artist now perceived that each of the foremost fins of this Fish* was furnished with a sort of hook, by means of which he had descended (and no doubt ascended) the tree.

"Why," said the Ant addressing the Bee, excitedly,—“Why does he always keep his mouth in a round O?”

“You should not make remarks on

* *Perca scandens*, L. or climbing perch.

natural misfortunes," said the Bee in a hushing tone. "I disapprove of it, Captain Mandible."

It was a matter of curious speculation in the mind of the Artist as to what the Fish wanted of him, and how he could possibly feel any interest in what had been transpiring. Our friend was eventually, however, relieved from this, by the Ant abruptly asking the Fish if he wanted to have his portrait painted; when, to the Artist's great amusement, the Fish replied that he did not, because he saw it every day in his own native mirror, sometimes as a single fish, sometimes as a twin fish, sometimes as one real fish with two shadow-fishes; and he had moreover seen his portrait in all sizes, shades, and colours. But what he actually wished was the picture of an

Object he had seen that morning, as he crept out of the stream lower down, and was crossing to get up a tree where he intended to take his breakfast.

It was very soon settled that the Artist should paint this; indeed he was resolved not to "turn away" any business this morning, his own affairs being so desperate that he was anxious to catch at any new chance.

But though the Fish was full of wonderment at all manner of things which he had run his nose against, or tickled with his tail, or patronized with one fin, or incidentally glanced at in a side-long way; still, there was such a tendency in him to magnify, and multiply, and exaggerate, and mystify,—not to say stultify—everything, that the Artist found his description very unmanageable for a picture of any kind.

However, out of his confused, gleaming, vague-outlined and no-outlined, dreamy descriptions, the Artist at length contrived to deduce that the Fish had that morning seen upon the green grass a flat face, like that of the moon in colour, only less ; and like also the thing (meaning also a face, no doubt) which sometimes looked over the parapet of a bridge down into the water upon him, which caused him to waggle away—*dart* away too, sometimes. That, on going nearer to it, so as to examine it with a poke or two of his nose, and by touching it nearly with his eyes, he, the Fish, had discovered a ribbed surface of bright golden sands, delightful to behold! All this he was ready to go before any magistrate and make oath that he had seen, and therefore he desired a drawing

in water-colours might be immediately made.

"I paint everything in oils," said the Artist.

"I abhor oil!" said the Fish; "the least drop of it floating near me, turns me quite sick."

"Oh, very well," said the Artist, "then I shall of course make a drawing in water-colours."

"What affectation!" said the Ant.

"Perhaps not," remarked the Bee; "it may be economy. He thinks it will cost less."

"What a scaly fellow!" said the Ant.

"He is poor," rejoined the Bee; "he has no such means of wealth as we have, —no stores."

Sooth to say, our Artist produced some very curious pictures. In the present

instance he feared he had been less successful than in his previous efforts; still he felt he had done enough to give him some title to praise from all that very large portion of the public who are no longer satisfied or pleased if they are not "astonished."

The Fish now came down the tree in the same slow and cautious way as before;—arrived at the foot of the trunk, and began hooking himself onward upon the grass towards a narrow rivulet a few paces distant.

"Don't you want to look at your picture?" cried the Ant.

"Yes," replied the Fish gravely, but without stopping.

"He neither stops nor turns his head," observed the Bee; "and that is very sensible."

"True," said the Ant; "because he has no joint in his neck to do it."

"I meant," replied the Bee, "that it was sensible not to ask a favour which he had heard denied three times before."

"Don't think so!" retorted the Ant; "on the contrary, he would be more likely to get it. The man might be worn out by the repetition of assaults."

The Fish meanwhile had hooked himself to the edge of the little stream;—in he went,—and vanished in a splash of his tail.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. MARY ROWE.—HER EASY INSOLENCE OF BEHAVIOUR,
AND UTTER INDIFFERENCE TO THE COMPANY PRESENT,
AND TO THE COURTEOUS READER.

WHILE our Artist was reflecting on the wonderful—the miraculous varieties that exist in Nature, he saw a Cat sauntering down a narrow pathway, or rabbit-run in the wood, and leisurely coming towards them.

“Would you like to have your portrait taken, Pussy?” cried the Ant merrily.

The Artist looked hopefully at the Cat: “Ah,” said he, “if *you*, now, have

seen anything novel this morning, which would make a picture, I might indeed expect something truly splendid from the peculiar vision of those lustrous and ever-changing eyes."

The Cat stopped—and stared at the party with large round eyes, setting her ears erect.

"This is no Cat!" cried the Ant: "this must be the horned owl!"

"What say you, madam?" said the Artist, extending one hand with a courteous smile towards the Cat, inviting her approach.

But the Cat only continued her staring.

"What does she take us for?" asked the Bee, turning to the Artist.

"You might at least open your mouth, Mrs. Mary Rowe!" said the Ant.

"Pray come nearer," continued the

Artist; "I beg—I entreat you will. Nay I must insist upon it."

The Cat stared at him as at first: then turning her head on one side, fell to licking her shoulder, as though it required an immediate and particular attention.

The company present, having borne this insolent indifference a sufficient length of time, our Artist requested her ladyship to inform him if he could be of any service to her, and if so, perhaps she would favour him with her commands.

The Cat now raised her head, and turning her gaze upward, stared all round at the tops of the trees with her large shining eyes, and then settling herself in an attitude of picturesque ease and comfort, quietly said:—

“I have been watching you all, this last half hour, in hopes you would go away, as I want this place to myself for a little while.”

“Why?” inquired the Ant.

The Artist looked round about to see if there were any mouse or rat-holes, which might render this spot valuable in her eyes; but observing none, he said:—

“I was in hopes, madam, that you might have added to my stock of original sketches this morning by a description of some novel thing or other you had encountered in the wood.”

But the Cat was now sitting with her back towards the group, apparently occupied with looking into the wood beyond, and with her own thoughts,—of which thoughts the company present formed no part whatever.

"You might at least give a civil answer!" murmured the Bee.

"I see many new things," said the Cat, "which are not worth speaking about."

"Have you seen any new thing this morning that would make a picture?" inquired the Artist, who was now resolved to avail himself to the utmost of his present opportunity in finding originality.

"Yes," replied the Cat, scratching one ear; "but it is not worth the trouble of telling."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IMPROBABLE LANDSCAPE DESCRIBED IN SONG BY
MASTER REDBREAST. — REALITY OF APPARITIONS, — IF
EYE-SIGHT BE REAL.—THE ARTIST'S LIFE IN DANGER.

“Oh paint *me* a picture!” cried a little quick, sweet voice close to the Artist. He turned, and saw right in front of him a Robin, who had perched exactly on the central point of the top of his easel, as if to display a new autumnal, red waistcoat, which he wore in the most puffed-out and conspicuous fashion.

“Oh paint me—paint *me* a picture!” cried he in his quick excited tone, “such a beautiful view have I had this bright

and blessed morning, of things well-known to me before, but never seen before in so lovely a brightness—in such various and changing colours—in so compact a form—as large altogether as my left eye, which was quite filled with the scene! Now, in presence of all these trees and woodland flowers, and of all this good company, not excepting the Cat, I wish to warble out in a style sufficiently clear, soft, and sweet, and in tones which need not be quicker in succession than may be intelligible to the meanest capacity, a description of a scene more delightful than was ever before presented to the eye of bird, or man, or fish,—of cat, or other creeping thing. There was a dark archway of leaves made by the meeting boughs of two purple beech-trees. *Ri-fol de riddle-ol de ray!* And through

this appeared a bright green woodland, —twee rol-de twiddle,—a cornfield and meadow—leetle ootle fiddle—and clover-fields beyond, all thick beset with flowers. Ri fol de leetle flookle day!”

“Do you expect me to paint this warbling ‘burthen?’” inquired the equally amused and perplexed Artist. But the Robin, not seeming to hear him, ran on in the same unbroken strain.

“Beyond the clover-fields was a farmhouse surrounded by yards and hedges; and green places, all full of silver sheep and golden cows, and goats with lamps on their foreheads. And the fruit-trees in the orchard were all smothered with white and pink blossoms, and the flower-beds in the garden were as bright as sunset clouds; and the walls of the farm-house were covered with creepers

that looked like red golden fire, and the windows of the house were of crimson light, and the thatch on the roof was of deep orange flame with no smoke to it. Ri riddle leetle fiddle dee! On a soft sloping hill as grey as old beech-bark, above the farm-house thatch there stood a great house hid in trees; but behind a long wall rose the arched roof of a palace made of rainbows cut in diamonds, and squares, and slices, which gleamed, and glanced, and shot on all sides of the heavens."

"Is the sketch nearly done, sir?" inquired the Ant, looking up at the Artist with humorous impertinence.

"Not exactly, sir," replied our friend: "it will need rather more time than has been given me in the description. I have only just settled on a sort of rough fly-

ing outline, and shall presently dab in a few bits of bright colour. But as to giving a close resemblance of what I have now heard, so far as I understand it, no colours I possess can effect it. What you have described, Master Redbreast, could only have justice done to it by a painted window—a window of richly stained glass, I mean,—with a brilliant sunset striking full upon it.”

“*That’s* the thing I want,” cried the Robin, “that’s the picture for me. I have often seen what you mention—have sat for whole minutes on the tip-top twig of a church-yard yew-tree to admire it. However, if you can’t do this, then do the best you can—the nearest to it—and, fluster my waistcoat! if I do not call you a prime little fellow!”

Bowing his head with a pleased coun-

tenance at this elegant compliment, the Artist fell to work at a great rate with his brightest and most transparent colours.

“How one admires,” said the Robin, “the skill of a painter, who thus preserves for us the memory of any new object, so that everybody may see it as we saw it!”

“That is, if he succeeds,” said the Bee, “in what he undertakes. But the Fine Arts are excellent things. We all admire them.”

“Don’t you very greatly admire the Fine Arts, Madam Puss?” said the Ant, winking one eye at the Robin.

The Cat was still sitting with her back turned to them, and she seemed to be looking at a merry grey Gnat who was dancing in the wood beyond. She made no reply; but, presently after, licked her

shoulder and breast, and attended to her left hip till it became very smooth and glossy.

But at this stage of his work a new miracle presented itself. He felt his head begin to ache with the internal, no less than the external effort of vision induced by this novel exercise of his faculties. A dizziness came across his eyes, and he shaded them for a few seconds by pressing one hand firmly upon his forehead. While in this state, a sense of the difficult struggle of life that was before him passed through his mind, and a feeling bordering upon hopelessness of attaining a successful result, especially as related to the fondest object of his wishes. He removed his hand with a deep sigh, and raised his head to continue his work, when he beheld the shadowy form of

Aurelia, softly floating through a vista of the woodland scenery! It was not real—it was her spirit! But is not *that* also a reality? Is not the moving power of life a reality? The highest? He saw her if ever he saw anything. Were his eyes made “the fools o’ the other senses?” or were they not rather “worth all the rest?”

Hitherto he had been endeavouring to see with the eyes of others (how hard the task!) existing and tangible objects which had been distinctly visible to them; *now* he beheld distinctly an object which was not tangible, neither did it exist. Yet there it was, beyond all doubt—as beyond all proof! It smiled; and the smile grew fainter and fainter, till all had faded away! He had seen a spirit,—in his “mind’s eye” of course; but also, if he could believe

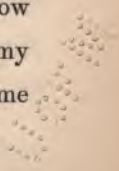
in his own eyes, he had absolutely seen it with them also. *How* this could be was only one of Heaven's many mysteries.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Robin.
"Where are your thoughts wandering, my boy? You look as if you had flown over the steeple, yonder, and had no thought of your friends around you here! Come, an't you ready for more yet?"

"More!" exclaimed the Artist.

"Yes, to be sure," cried the Robin; and without waiting for any further reply, he again poured forth a voluble strain.

"All that I have at present told you, —though I forgot to say that it all rose up shining from a hard rough yellow ground,—was only what I saw with my right eye. My left eye, at the same



time—so, you know, you must now paint another picture on the other side of that one—my left eye at the same time was looking across a bright rivulet with white water-lilies in the middle, and bulrushes on the banks, and over on the opposite bank this eye was watching a dry brown leaf that was moving to and fro in a way that did not seem like the action of the wind; and I thought that probably underneath it was something good to eat. However, I did not hop off to see after it; I could not bear to leave the spot where I had alighted. My heart was too full of my *right* eye."

The Artist smiled closely down upon his canvas, bending so as not to be seen, lest he should offend the Robin by laughing at the figure of speech he had used in his idiomatic way. But in vain. The

Robin's eye, right or left, was too quick and keen. Bob saw him.

"Now, sir," said he sharply, "let me look at my picture, *Nº. 1*, which is just ready, or near enough."

"Impossible," said the Artist. "All our friends here will tell you that I never do this."

"What!" exclaimed the Robin, "not show me my *own* picture?"

"I really cannot," pursued the Artist; "and least of all in the present case."

"Not let me see it!" cried the Robin, with an enraged bow of head and tail.

"Least of all," continued the obdurate Artist, "where the difficulties have been so great as in your description."

"But I *will* see it!" shrilled forth the Robin, striking his bill upon the easel. "I will see it. And the Bee, *she* shall

see hers! And the Ant shall see his! Won't you, 'Dibble? And the Spider shall see hers; and,—though he don't deserve it for his indifference (here Bob gave a double bow, at the same time striking his bill on the easel) the Fish shall see his, or my name is not Robin."

"Bravo!" cried the Ant. "Bravo, cholerick Bob!"

The Artist laid down his canvas and his palette, and his implements, and looked amazed at the little gentleman who spoke and bowed so hotly, and smote his bill with so self-willed and impatient an emphasis.

"Sir," said he, "I really have not time to show these pictures."

"Two seconds! two seconds!" cried the Robin. "Oh! what a dog you are!"

"Pardon me," remonstrated the Artist;

"the time it would cost me, if I *did* show them, is incalculable. Everybody would set me to work again."

"You could find time enough," said the Robin, with a furious double bow, "to laugh at what I said of my right eye! Shall we put up with this, my friends? Let's throw all his pictures into the rivulet, and push him in after them!"

At this alarming proposition, the Bee interposed with a deep tone of reproof. She said she never would take part in any such unreasonable violence, nor would she permit it to be done in her presence.

The Robin danced furiously towards the Bee. "Blow your old horn with one note, elsewhere!" cried he; "we'll not attend to it here. As for looking at the pictures which he has turned in a shame-faced way to the ground, there is no doubt

a better reason for his not displaying them than he has thought it prudent to give us. The real reason is, that he knows very well they are not at all like the Object we have each described."

"That assertion requires proof," interposed the Spider, peeping over from her hiding-place; "and as we have been at the trouble of giving these descriptions to the Artist, I think he is bound to let us make some comparison of his sketches by the side of the Objects."

"I don't know that he is bound to do this at a minute's notice," said the Bee;—"but what do you say, sir? It would much oblige us, you are aware."

"I should much rather not have done so as yet," replied the Artist; "but as I may not have the pleasure of meeting you all again in the same convenient

way as at this moment, I shall be glad to see the different objects, if possible, and then I can better determine whether I ought to allow my sketches to be seen."

"Hurra!" cried the Ant.

"I hope they are not very far distant," said the Artist as he began to pack up his sketches and materials.

"Mine is quite close," said the Robin, whose feathers had gradually become smooth again.

"So is mine," said the Bee.

"Mine is some distance," said the Ant.

"Mine is a long way off," said the Spider, "and I shall not go unless I am carried."

"Who'll carry the Spider?" shouted the Ant. "For my part I don't care if I

drag you upon a dry leaf a few yards, so that you don't come too near me. You have such a *very* unpleasant breath, do you know."

It was settled that the Spider should ride on the Artist's shoulder; and it was presently found that the Ant had fixed himself on the other shoulder.

It was agreed they should visit the nearest object first. So the Robin led the way, flitting and hopping politely from bough to bough, and from tree to tree.

The Cat ran in front of the Artist's legs, with her tail high in the air. The Bee slowly followed the *cortège*, murmuring gravely to herself,—

"Busy—busy—buzzing brain,
Use your hands or nothing gain."

CHAPTER IX.

RESULTS OF A DOUBLE APPRENTICESHIP TO ART.—CAPTAIN
MANDIBLE'S COMMENTARIES.—TWO THEORIES OF VISION.—
MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT.—THE ONE OBJECT OF SEVEN
EYE-SIGHTS.

OH wheels of Life! if ye could but be made to run less swiftly while the Artist works his onward way, not through good and needful labours, for they are a just tax, but through all those heaps of labours against adversity, which cause such waste of time in low contests and struggles, and blunders' induced by false hopes rising wildly out of unmerited disappointments;—Oh mortal wheels of genius, why cannot ye be worn out fairly

by fair work, instead of the useless grinding of the imperfect social scheme which surrounds you!

Reflections like the above passed sadly through our friend's mind as he moved silently onward;—now glancing at his strange companions—and now at his sketches, the outrageous novelty of which made him feel by no means sanguine; now pondering with bitter grief on the loss of his finished pictures of legitimate Art—now thinking of Aurelia, and bemoaning his bad prospects; now reflecting on the base and provoking fact that to get to the town with the present sketches and implements needed no less a sum than fifteen shillings! Here was he in a wood at fifty miles distance—in company with a Bee, a Spider, a Robin, an Ant, and a Cat,—and without so much as

sixpence. Even a crust to dip in a rivulet by the way, was denied him. And this was the result of a double apprenticeship to Art! Fourteen years he had laboured assiduously, and as he felt in the right way for excellence, but the wrong way, as it seemed, for success. It was a bitter pill to swallow; in fact he could *not* swallow it.

The Robin meantime continued to hop or flit from spray to spray. What he thought a very short distance some of the others considered quite a journey. They had been silent for some little while, as though each had been busy with his own thoughts. Their taciturnity, however, was presently interrupted with the following bit of biography.

“When I first entered the army,” said the Ant, “I found many things which

appeared arduous and unprofitable; but after I had seen actual service, and had been in two or three general engagements, then matters became much easier. I had taken several negro slaves in battle, and they turned out excellent servants, bringing me constant supplies of food—raw, or cooked by mastication,—and both game and vegetables. I also had a very intelligent milch cow. She was of a beautiful light green colour, and her body so transparent you could see her heart beating inside. None of my other green cows were comparable to her. I also had a number of purple-black cows, which I farmed out in a bean-field when the beans were in flower.”

“Who asked you for any account of your small private life?” inquired the Spider, with sarcastic composure.

"Nobody," replied the Ant; "but having no reason to be ashamed of anything, as you have, I rather court than shun inquiry. Besides, I thought it might amuse you to hear what I was about to relate."

"Relate it," said the Bee, "if it has sense."

"Do not!" cried the Robin: "once checked, I would never gratify curiosity. I can't help saying this, because you were insulted; at the same time, I would give anything to hear the story you were about to tell us."

"What I was going to tell you," said the Ant, "has gone clean out of my head, but I believe it had some reference to the life of this man here, who seems to have sense of some kind—to have skill—to have laboured hard for a long

time, and to have laid up no store; neither has he any servants or cows. Just now he ate three berries from the hedge, and then gave a sigh because he wanted more and could not find them. Is this like a creature who has right senses?—one who must gain a living, or else die?”

“What should *you* know of senses?” asked the Spider bitterly;—“or of life and death?” added she with solemn scorn.

“Do spiders ever die?” retorted the Ant briskly. “Who ever saw a dead one? You cast your skins and leave them about to make believe that you have died, like natural creatures; but that does not deceive me. Other poor dead spider-cases may also be found—but these are of your murdered husbands. No, wretch! you cannot die, except you be slain outright.

You can scarcely even be starved to death."

"In some dark and secret hole ;—" began the Spider ;—"alone —unknown—" there she stopped—stared—and retired slowly.

"Now, *you* could,"—and the Ant here turned to the Poor Artist,—“you could easily be starved to death, couldn't you?"

Our Poor Artist sighed again, and most bitterly, as he heard all this. It came fully home to him. Here had he been working for months, and all his hopes had been ruined; and now he had lent his pencil in despair to the strange forms and fancies derived from the senses of creatures, different from his own species, and which could therefore have little chance of appreciation or recognition; and, more bitter than all, even if it were otherwise, how on earth was he to

travel fifty miles with his artist's baggage, when the coach-fare alone would amount to the dreadful sum of fifteen shillings. Independent of this, he would be without the means of life while he made the journey on foot.

"But meantime, the Robin does not display right senses," interposed the Spider; "for he has already led us in no straight lines, but all in half-circles and zig-zags, so that at best he must be taking you the very longest possible way to his Object."

At this reproof the Robin settled upon a point, and sang a sweet and merry song.

"This is mere insolence!" said the Bee.

"Just like him!" said the Cat.

"Why does pussy speak?" inquired the Ant. "She has no object to describe, or lead us to."

"Yes I have," said the Cat, in a plaintive tone; "but it's not worth looking at. I scarcely looked at it myself."

"What is it you *do* look at?" said the Ant. "You never like to look anybody in the face. Why is your back always turned to us?"

"She sees us with her ears," said the Robin. "Notice those twisted points!"

"A Cat," said the Ant, with a brisk and confident air of youthful philosophy,—
"a Cat observes nothing that does not immediately concern her own eating or catching interests. In fact, all creatures who have only four legs are very deficient in observation."

"That is not a correct statement," said the Bee; "you are thinking exclusively of your own powers of minute and excursive examination. Four-legged crea-

tures often have good sight. Dogs, for instance, are great observers; nothing escapes the eye of a monkey;* and you never meet a horse in a lane or road, without his giving a quiet look at you as he passes."

"Really," exclaimed the Artist, "this is all very true; and as regards the Cat it is very surprising. A pair of eyes so wonderful and beautiful, not to say alarming, one would have expected to be the most observant of visual organs."

"Not so;" interrupted the Spider. "But what can be expected of one pair of eyes?"

"Ah!" said the Bee, "there is more than the question of numbers in this. It is the thing *behind* the eye that makes the

* Not, properly, a quadruped, nor a biped; but a *quadrumanus*; or, as the Germans call him, *vier-händig*.

great difference in all our visions. It is the mind, Mrs. Spinster,—yes, it is the mind that makes the sort of sight we see.”

“No !” cried the Robin, abruptly,—“no ; it is the object that makes all the difference with me.”

“Look !” said the Spider, extending and raising one claw, as if to demonstrate a problem ; “look ! the object is the first thing, call it A ; the mind is the third thing, call it C ; and the middle thing, call it X, is the sort of eyes we have, and these mediate or interpret all from without, to all that’s within. And hence the eyes,—what they are, and how they see,—make the fact, and difference of visible nature throughout all living creatures. $A + X = C$,—the object added to the peculiar eye-sight,—gives the mind concerning that object.”

"I work it differently," said the Bee.
"I work it, $A + C = X$; the object added to the mind, is equal to the eye-sight."

"What stuff all this is," said the Cat, stiffly whisking her tail. "Whatever concerns me I never fail to see rightly, and without any of your whimsical speculations. I know very well where Master Red-waist-coat is leading you, and to what Object. I saw him staring at it this morning."

"Not you!" said the Robin, "or I should have twigged you as you were lurking about."

"I *did* see you," said the Cat. "I swear it!"

"You often swear on less occasions," said the Robin.

"I object to swearing," said the Bee; "it is immoral, and besides, useless."

"But in the present case," pursued

the Robin, "it is very necessary she should swear if she would have us believe her; for a greater story-teller than the Cat never lived."

"It is of very little consequence to me," said the Cat, moving on with contemptuous indifference, "what such hopping morsels as you may twitter about me, or what any of these insects may think."

"I read in the newspaper the other day," said the Ant, apparently addressing the Bee, "as I was running over the columns which a sleepy traveller held in his hand, a very interesting account of a cat who was killed by a mouse."

"Humph!" murmured the Bee.

The Cat stopped,—stared up at the little speaker with bright, round eyes,—and waited, with erect and pointed ears.

“Yes,” continued the Ant, drily, “I there read it under the head of ‘Melancholy Accident.’ A cat had caught a mouse on a lawn, and let it go again in her cruel way, in order to play with it; when the mouse, inspired by despair, and seeing only one hole possible to escape into,—namely, the round, red throat of the cat, very visible through her open mouth—took a bold spring into her jaws, just escaping between her teeth,—and into her throat he struggled and stuffed himself—and so the cat was suffocated!”*

The Cat smiled contemptuously, and walked on. The Robin laughed immoderately, and flew off in a circle above

* A paragraph did appear in the newspapers some months since, from which the above ingenious impertinence of Captain Mandible was taken. The heroic act of Marcus Curtius Mouse was declared to have occurred at Kingsdown, Bristol.

the party, alighting finally on a spray that overhung a declivity.

“Are we to follow you down?” inquired the Artist.

“Yes!” cried the Robin, and fluttered a few trees lower.

“I have been wondering,” said the Bee, “whether the capricious turns and fancies of Sir Bob, might not accidentally lead in the very direction of my own object; and I find it to be so. This is the very way to the new thing I have seen and described to our Artist, only we have not come in the proper direct line, as a sensible creature would fly.”

“I could have come to *my* object by this route,” said the Ant; “though it is not the best way.”

“The object which I wish this poor two-eyed Artist to see,” said the Spider,

“lies close at hand. If I were upon yonder overhanging branch, and only ran to the extreme leaf at the end, I could drop down in a perpendicular line within half a fathom of the level of its base.”

“I have said nothing all this time,” simpered the Cat; “but the thing I saw lies just below us. It is the very same object that little familiar Bob stood staring at this morning with his right eye.”

“Why, then,” exclaimed the Artist, “you are all going the same way! How can this be?”

“Here it is!” cried the Robin, as he made a rapid bow to the company behind, and instantly dropped down through the foliage.

He was quickly followed by the Bee, who gave out a loud deep tone of some alarm.

The Cat had also disappeared.

The Artist, with the Ant and the Spider still mounted each on a shoulder, now descended a break in a kind of bank, through a mass of soft foliage, and quickly arrived upon a bright green plot of grass sloping towards a silver rivulet. The woods rose on each side, but there was an opening in front which displayed a lovely landscape scenery, and a far distance softly blending with the clouds.

“This is *my* Object!” cried the Robin.

“I knew it was this thing,” said the Cat.

“Let me look,—I must be sure!” said the Bee, as she went fumbling all round something bright that lay upon the grass.

“And I *am* sure.”

“Ah! that’s *my* Object!” exclaimed the Ant, running rapidly down the Artist’s

arm, and side, and leg, and over his foot, and across the grass.

The Spider dropped from the Artist's shoulder, and ran forward after the Ant. "Let no one touch it," cried she; "for this Object belongs to my eyes!"

It was obvious that they had all seen the same thing!

In utter bewilderment, the Artist drew near to a bright shining thing that lay upon the grass, and at intervals shot forth keen rays of light. He started—he stooped to make sure, as the Bee said, that his eyes did not deceive him. It was a bright new sovereign! And upon the bright golden surface of this coin, which had become the medium of so many natural wonders, there shone a large drop of dew!

CHAPTER X.

THE ONE FIXED STANDARD OF COMPARISON.—OUR ARTIST IS
THREATENED AND OVERTHROWN.—DISAPPEARANCE OF HIS
PATRONS.—THE BEE ASCENDS THE HEAVENS.

UNIVERSALITY is made up of countless individualities; and not only does each different species of creature feel itself of great importance to nature, but each individual of each species regards itself as of special account, and compares itself complacently with all the world that surrounds it. Each individual of necessity makes himself, in a great measure, the standard of comparison for all others; by his own senses he measures yours, by his

own excellence or incapacity he estimates the qualities of others. The far sight miscalculates the near sight; the near sight miscalculates the far; the simple sight, which only sees unity, cannot judge of the double sight, which takes in two different objects, one with each eye; nor can it judge of the compound sight, which sees only a complication of parts—perhaps only one part distinctly at a time, and the rest as in a dim kaleidoscope—not to speak of many wonders, such as the learning of man has never yet fathomed or conceived. But each of these owners of eyes (and at this moment, and indeed throughout this little book, all eyes are equally respected by the author, and no favour shown), each of these owners of eyes, let us repeat, very naturally, and of necessity, considers

his especial pair, or set, as the standard of all correct vision. If he happen to have imperfect eyes, and to know it, then he makes the eyes of his species stand for his belief in perfection. It is quite clear that all of us—men, bees, ants, fish, spiders, cats, robins, and the rest,—see things very differently, not only as shown in the present fragment of natural history, but throughout creation; and equally certain is it, that each species sets itself up as the true seer of things as they are. The grand question therefore is, who is right? Is nobody right, anyhow; or, are we all right, somehow? As for our Poor Artist,—the seventh of these eye-sights,—he entertained no manner of doubt but that he had “found a sovereign!”

In the general surprise and confusion, the Robin first became articulate.

"Here's a pretty incomprehensible affair!" cried he, flustering out his feathers. "It appears that *we have all seen the same thing!* Some of you must have indulged in embellishment to no small extent—not to speak of lies. And now, here comes Stupid-head to swear the same, I dare say!"

The Fish, who had come down the rivulet, had just emerged from the stream and begun to creep up the bank, above which his head appeared, when he was stopped by the abrupt compliment of the Robin, who was the first to espy him amidst the grass that rose like a stiff-green ruff round his pale face.

"Well, Stupid-head?" pursued the Robin.

"Yes," said the Fish, answering at once to the name, and opening his eyes and

mouth till they made three round O's.—
“Yes; that is the beautiful strange Object
which I described. Where's my picture?
O! I want to see my picture, O!”

“To be sure!” exclaimed the Robin,
striking his bill repeatedly upon the twig
on which he had perched. “To be sure
you do!—so do I!—so we all do. Don't
we all do so?—yes, of course we do.
Now, show us our pictures, and settle
the question of whose description is true!
That's the point!”

“If you don't show me my picture at
once,” said the Ant, placing himself in
a warlike attitude, “I'll bite off your
head, sir!”

“Come,” said the Bee, in a deep, fuzzy
voice, as if hoarse with anger; “since
each of us claims the Object, the pictures
must now be shown, or the dispute will

bring about a general war. Never, in this world, did a Bee relinquish her rights,—what is life in comparison!”

“Nothing,” cried the Robin, with a quick bow.

“Nothing!” echoed the Ant; “nor death, either! Come on—charge!”

At this moment, while the Artist stood with a mind confused by the surrounding scene, the Cat made a sudden rush between his legs. He started,—reeled sideways,—and, being unable to recover himself, fell at his length upon the grass, while, with the jerk, all his painting apparatus flew from his hands, and all the sketches were scattered upon the green slope.

Now, it seemed palpable to the valiant leaders of the onslaught that the Cat had only obeyed Captain Mandible's order to

“charge,” and had acted in flying cavalry fashion. The fact was, however, that she had only made a dash at the Fish,—lost him,—and tumbled headlong into the brook.

By no means comprehending the true state of affairs, but rather imagining that he had been overthrown by a combined charge of his enraged patrons, the Artist raised himself to a sitting position, and looked round about him. His sketches were scattered over the grass in all directions, face upwards, and his broken easel, his crayons, brushes, palette, little paint-bladders, and sundry small bottles, had been flung about at random. But what had become of his enemies, so lately his friends, who had given him “commissions to paint” so many pictures? Were they all gone?

Whether his assailants, having been accustomed to see him always in an upright position, had believed he had vanished, or been transformed,—or that he was struck dead by their first onset, and therefore they had retreated, either in consternation, or satisfied with the finality of the blow they had inflicted: whether, in his fall, he had pressed some of them deep into the grass; or whether, having seen his sketches, and no one being able to recognise his own, they had all retired in utter scorn of himself and his art, one thing was manifest—they were gone!

He rose slowly to his feet. Chancing to look down the stream, he saw the long back of the Cat, as she clawed herself up a bank on the opposite side, having been carried some way down by the current.

She instantly scurried away, never once looking behind her.

In a very curious condition of mind, at which he would himself in all probability have laughed very heartily, if he could only have been a witness to it instead of the party exhibiting the absurd state aforesaid, our Artist was proceeding to gather up his scattered property, when his ear caught the sound of a rustling and struggling in the grass, followed by a loud buzzing, as of mingled rage and perplexity.

He soon found out the cause. It was the Bee, whose simple eyes (the three which are placed in the upper part of the head), by some accidental crushing of one of the paint-bladders, had been spurted over so as entirely to cover and defeat that portion of her visual facul-

ties. Our Artist hastened to her assistance; picked her up; and was about to clear off the paint with his handkerchief, but the Bee was so lost to all her habitual reason and philosophy, and so tumultuous in her struggles with the incomprehensible injury she had received on her horizontal regulators, that nothing could be done for her. So, after darting her sting into the handkerchief several times, she fumbled and elbowed herself out of the Artist's fingers and rose into the air. She ascended perpendicularly. Still up,—and up,—and upward she went. She looked like a tiny lark. It was a very bright and very clear sky, so that her little body was quite visible. She continued to ascend perpendicularly, humming and buzzing her complaint. The sound got fainter. Her body became

a speck—a mote—the sound could no longer be heard, the ascending mote was lost.*

* It must not be assumed that any positive opinion of the use of the simple eyes of a bee is sought to be founded on a single experiment; but the above description is taken from an account given me by Professor Owen of the perpendicular ascent of a bee, whose simple eyes had been purposely covered. She continued to ascend till she was lost.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARTIST ENDEAVOURS TO TRACE THE DIFFERENT EYE-SIGHTS TO THE ONE OBJECT THEY HAD SEEN, AND TO RECONCILE THEIR DISCREPANCIES.—A BUMPKIN'S DISCOVERY OF SOMETHING WORTH SEEING.

BUT amidst all the extraordinary events just recorded, there was one in especial, which even our Poor Artist himself had not sufficiently estimated at the time. It was the fortunate accident of becoming suddenly the possessor of a sovereign! Yes, of a coin which may be no great matter under ordinary circumstances, but in *his* it was of the utmost importance. He could now convey himself with his wonderful sketches straight to the town

in which were centred, all his hopes, all his prospects of success,—all his chance of making a “name,” and of marrying Aurelia! As for any connexion—any sort of resemblance between his pictures and the Object—he never thought of that; indeed it did not seem to him how such different things as they all were, could have any possible similarity or resemblance to a common object. Still, the effort to make out some kind of likeness, continually occupied his thoughts as he walked along.

A sanguine temperament is easily excited to joyous anticipations, and notwithstanding all the bitter disappointments and mortifications our Poor Artist had experienced throughout his career, he was now as much elated as though he had certainly arrived upon the high

road to reputation and success. He soon reached a village where he procured a conveyance sufficiently incommodious, but fortune had for once smiled upon him, and nothing now seemed an obstacle. Into this jolting machine he contrived to squeeze himself by the side of the driver, after having packed all his precious commodities safely in the body of the little cart, amidst hay-bands and green leaves, to prevent their chafing, or other injury.

As they thus trundled and jerked along the roads and lanes, our friend soon lost himself in a delightful reverie. In the course of these roving thoughts he constantly reverted to the wonderful discrepancy which existed between Seven different Eye-sights, in contemplating One and the same Object. He endeavoured to recall what had been said by the

several parties, and sought to compare, or rather, to find some ground for what they had seen.

The Bee had seen the circle of the sovereign as a hexagonal figure. That was intelligible from the various known circumstances, such as the shape of the lenses of her eyes, and the shape of the honey-cells. It was set round with lights. That might have been the chasing on the edges, magnified or multiplied by the peculiarity of the Bee's vision. It also appeared that the Bee had seen VI through a liquid globe of the colour of honey. That was clearly the gold shining through the dew-drop, and the VI, which our friend had at first supposed to refer to the Bee's favorite number of *six*, he now perceived to be the first two letters of Her Gracious Majesty's name; and

that the same numerals inverted, as he had erroneously supposed, were in fact the two last letters (I A) of the same royal designation ; the Greek accents (after I) being in all probability some slight scratches or marks not visible to the human eye, unless through a microscope. As for the rest of the Bee's description, the Artist attributed it to a similar cause, and, he also admitted to himself that he had taken a few liberties in the general treatment, according to his own imagination, whereof came his sketch, entitled "Outskirts of the Gardens of the Hesperides."

Of the description of the Ant he could trace no resemblance on the sovereign, beyond the golden ground of the battle-field, and he could therefore only suppose that numerous jots, and scratches, and

other inequalities of surface had presented certain appearances to the eyes of the Ant invisible to an organ of less magnifying powers.*

“But how,” thought the Artist, “shall I trace the remotest likeness to this Object in the extraordinary account given me by the Spider? The speculations and computations of all her various eyes, founded on the figure 8, might indeed have been derived from that figure being the only one recognized in a marked manner by the Spider in the date of the year of coinage beneath the bust of Her Majesty. The broken limbs of the spider-battle might have been the frays

* The Object in question was examined under a microscope of great power. It is not of course pretended that every eye may see the same things as those described by our many-eyed friends; but anybody may see that the Poor Artist has not indulged his imagination without foundation.

and scratches of the surface. The various things, however, seen one above the other, troubled the Artist for a long time. He only solved the problem, in some degree, by supposing that certain objects had passed overhead at that moment, which the eyes of the Spider had seen reflected in the dew-drop on the sovereign, according to the peculiarities of her vision.

With regard to the golden ridges of the "ribbed sea-sands," described by the Fish, this was no doubt attributable to some roughness of surface on the coin as seen through the dew-drop, and to the staring vision of the finny beholder. As for his recognition of the countenance beneath, and his comparison of it with a thing looking over a bridge,—gallantry, no less than loyalty, forbad our Artist to proceed further with such conjectures.

With regard to the Cat, what she saw or said, was of too indifferent a kind to merit consideration; but the extraordinary landscape and distance described by the Robin, caused our Artist a world of painstaking to trace to some tangible foundation.

At length, however, he came to the conviction that the whole landscape, described by the Robin as seen by his *right* eye, had been reflected in miniature, yet to the minutest parts, in the dew-drop; and that the extraordinary colours were derived from a beautiful sunset, and the extraordinary lights of his picture were this sunset falling upon the windows of the farm-house, and upon the glass frames of a hot-house beyond.

The Artist was roused from his smiling, and somewhat self-complacent reverie, by

an ejaculation of the countryman who was driving him:—

“Lor, Measter, oney lookey theree!—
Theree’s a bootiful sight! It does one’s
eyes good to zee zuch a wonderful sight!”

Our friend looked up. They were approaching a brick-field; and, leaning against a large pile of bricks, gasping for breath, by reason of his fatness, there was a prize-ox on his way to a cattle-show.

“Theree!” said the countryman, “I call that a thing *worth* zeeing!”

“Certainly,” said the Artist to himself, “there seems much truth in the Bee’s remark. It’s the faculty *behind* the eye that makes the great difference, at least, with creatures of the same species.”

CHAPTER XII.

WHEREIN THE AUTHOR CRAVES PARDON OF HIS READERS
FOR THE IRREPRESSIBLE IMPULSE WHICH CAUSES HIM TO
MAKE A SHORT DIGRESSION ON THE MOST WONDERFUL
AND LEAST NOTICED FACTS OF NATURAL HISTORY.

IN a delightful and instructive little work by Dr. W. H. Harvey, entitled "The Sea-side Book," there occurs the following quotation:—

"An eloquent modern writer"—(he ought to have been named more specifically than as a "modern" writer,—there are so many of them)—"in arguing for the existence on this earth of an invisible world of spirits, draws a striking illustration of his subject from our con-

nection with the lower animals, whose forms we indeed see around us, but the secrets of whose being, whose motives of action, and whose final destiny, remain unfathomable mysteries. 'We are,' says he, 'in a world of spirits, as well as in a world of sense, and we hold communion with it, and take part in it, though we are not conscious of doing so. If this seems strange to any one, let him reflect that we are undeniably taking part in a third world, which we do indeed see, but about which we do not know more than about the angelic host,—the world of dumb animals. Can anything be more marvellous or startling, *unless we were used to it*, than that we should have a race of beings about us, whom we do but see, and as little know of their state, or can describe their interests, or their

destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is, indeed, a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds upon it, that we familiarly use, I may say hold intercourse with, creatures who are as much strangers to us, and as mysterious as if they were fabulous, unearthly beings, which Eastern superstitions have invented. They have apparently, passions, habits, and a certain accountableness; but all is mystery about them. We do not know whether they can sin or not, whether they are under punishment, whether they are to live after this life. We inflict very great sufferings on a portion of them, and they in turn, every now and then seem to retaliate upon us, as if by a wonderful law. We depend on them in various important ways; we use their labour,

we eat their flesh. This, however, relates to such of them as come near us. Cast your thoughts abroad on the whole number of them, large and small, in vast forests, or in the water, or in the air, and then say whether the presence of such countless multitudes, so various in their natures, so strange and wild in their shapes, living on the earth without ascertainable object, is not as mysterious as anything which Scripture says about the angels? Is it not plain to us that there is a world inferior to us in the scale of beings, with which we are connected, without understanding what it is? And is it difficult to faith to admit the word of Scripture concerning our connection with a world superior to us?'"

If illustrations and instances of the truth of all this be needed, how many start up

to our minds. What do we know of the ox, but to eat his beef, and make trade with his hide and horns? What of the sheep, but his mutton and his wool? Of the elephant?—we know that he furnishes us with ivory, and, moreover, that he is a wise beast, and comprehends many things that relate to *us*; but there our knowledge of all that is within him stops abruptly. We see him die—his body decays, his bones lie strewn about like a great wreck,—and we conclude there is an end of him for ever and ever. Why so? The same fate awaits ourselves, yet we have very different expectations. The physical conformation of all animals being identical in principle with our own*—one general law, with special adaptations—and the

* See "*On the Nature of Limbs*," by Richard Owen, F.R.S., pp. 39, 40, &c.

apparent, or physical, finality of us all being *exactly* the same, can be no sort of argument for the annihilation of any class, however inferior. We assume that dumb creatures die for ever — more absolutely than the grass they eat, which springs up again in its season : but, honestly speaking, we know no more of the matter than the dumb creatures themselves. When the dog, whose intelligence and faithfulness had won our admiration and regard, stretches himself out and dies, a *something* has departed very different from the poor skin and bones which remain. What has become of it ? Oh : it was merely instinct. Well, where is *that* gone ? Perhaps it has gone out like a candle-flame blown by the wind, and lost in the wide atmosphere ! A death-puff has settled it. But the candle-flame had no instinct, no perceptions ; its

diffusion is not the same thing as the departure of the smallest degree of affection or intelligence.

“What!” it will be asked, “do you argue an immortality for the dumb creatures?” Certainly not; but we do think some such inference would be far more logical by close analogy, than their utter annihilation.

Hath not a dog *eyes*? hath not a dog limbs?—organs, dimensions, *senses*, *affections*, *passions*?—fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, warmed and cooled with the same winter and summer that a prize-fighter is? We do not argue for the perpetuity of dumb animals, but only say there is a *something* within them, which, by whatever name it be called, is spiritually distinct from their material organization; and all we do is to ask, “What becomes of that something?”

How do we appear to these our dumb companions in the world? Some of them, our domestics, regard us with familiar eyes of mutual understanding, to a considerable extent, such as the dog, and the horse. So, in a less and lower degree, does the cow; but the bull always looks at you with uplifted inquiry and defiance: "Man delights not him." The sight of a woman in a red cloak (to invert the story of the blind man, who, being asked what idea he had of *scarlet*, replied that it seemed to him like the sound of a *trumpet*) often appears to excite the imagination of the bull to a warlike mood. But while various domestic animals, and birds too, regard us with a sort of "knowing" look, others stare at us with a vague wonder, hopeless of understanding our strange conformation and behaviour. Again, another set of them

seem to speculate upon us; try to make us out; endeavour to break through the inexplicable barrier that divides us; hold their heads on one side; sniff, give nervous starts, and cock their ears. The majority, however, either fear us, and make off; or else take no sort of notice of us.

But neither do we understand much of the physical senses of the great living crowd of dumb ones around us. Has the vulture, and all that class of birds who bolt everything, any organ of taste? When the owl swallows a mouse whole, does he taste him in his stomach? Is it the same with the pigeon and his peas? What sort of hearing has the shark, if any? The organs of smell in the shark, who discovers, through the great volume of water, and through the dense timbers, that somebody is dead, yea, or dying, in the cabin, must

be wonderful. But we know nothing about this beyond the fact. The same creature, whether shark or cat, that has a wonderful sense of smell for some things seems to have no nose at all for many others. No one ever saw a monkey smell a flower. If he did so, it would only be to inquire if it were eatable, or poisonous. Then, as to the sense of touch, what a fine work goes on in the language of the antennæ of insects; and yet it is impossible that the majority of them can possess sensations like ours. A wasp flies in at the window, alights on the breakfast-table, runs swiftly up the side of the sugar-basin, and displays his grim face in a brazen mask with iron spectacles, just above the rim. The next moment he darts upon the sugar. But an alarmed hand advances a pair of scissors, and suddenly snips

off his head. The body staggers, and perhaps flies off, while the jaws of the brazen mask with iron spectacles continue for some seconds to work away at the sugar, as though no such event had occurred.

With the general character, temper, faculties, and habits of the inferior creatures, naturalists are of course far more intimately acquainted than the world at large; but the naturalists are only an exceptional class, comprising a few individuals; and even among the highest of these, how little can they fathom of the mind, or what is invisibly *going on* within those many-shaped grotesque heads of beasts, and birds, and fish, and insects.

The greyhound runs by eye-sight only, and this we observe as a fact. The carrier-pigeon flies his two hundred and fifty miles homeward, by eye-sight, *viz.*, from

point to point of objects which he has *marked*; but this is only our conjecture. The fierce dragon-fly, with twelve thousand lenses in his eyes, darts from angle to angle with the rapidity of a flashing sword, and as rapidly darts back—not turning in the air, but with a clash reversing the action of his four wings—the only known creature that possesses this faculty. His sight then, both forwards and backwards, must be proportionately rapid with his wings, and instantaneously calculating the distance of objects, or he would dash himself to pieces. But in what conformation of his eye does this consist? No one can answer. A cloud of ten thousand gnats dances up and down in the sun, the gnats being so close together that you can scarce see the minutest interval between them, yet no one knocks another

headlong upon the grass, or breaks a leg or a wing, long and delicate as these are. Suddenly, amidst your admiration of this matchless dance, a peculiarly high-shouldered vicious gnat, with long, pale, pendant nose, darts out of the rising and falling cloud, and settling on your cheek inserts a poisonous sting. What possessed the little wretch to do this? Did he smell your blood in the mazy dance? No one knows. A four-horse coach comes suddenly upon a flock of geese on a narrow road, and drives straight through the middle of them. A goose was never yet fairly run over; nor a duck. They are under the very wheels and hoofs, and yet, somehow, they contrive to flap and waddle safely off. Habitually stupid, heavy, and indolent, they are nevertheless equal to any emergency. Why does the lonely

woodpecker, when he descends his tree and goes to drink,—stop several times on his way,—listen, and look round—before he takes his draught? No one knows. How is it that the species of ant, which is taken in battle by other ants to be made slaves, should be the black, or negro-ant? No one knows. A large species of the star-fish (*Luidia fragilis-sima*) possesses the power of breaking itself into fragments, under the influence of terror, rage, or despair. “As it does not generally break up,” says Professor Forbes, “before it is raised above the surface of the sea, cautiously and anxiously I sunk my bucket, and proceeded in the most gentle manner to introduce *Luidia* to the purer element. Whether the cold air was too much for him, or the sight of the bucket too terrific, I know not;

but in a moment he proceeded to dissolve his corporation, and at every mesh of the dredge his fragments were seen escaping. In despair I grasped at the largest, and brought up the extremity of an arm with its terminating eye, the spinous eyelid of which opened and closed with something exceedingly like a wink of derision." With this exquisite specimen of natural history wonders, for which naturalists can only vouch that "such is the fact," and admit that they know no more, we shall close our digression.

You see that young crab blowing bubbles on the sea-shore!—such is the infancy of science. He waits patiently for the rising tide, when all these globules of air shall be fused in a great discovery.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW EXHIBITION-ROOM.—THE UNCLE'S VISIT.—MEMORY
AND CONSCIENCE. — AN EJECTMENT. — PROPOSALS FOR
PURCHASING THE WHOLE COLLECTION.

OUR hopeful Artist arrived at the town. His first venture in respect of an "exhibition-room" had certainly been attended with every mortification and disaster. He could not forget it. However, matters now wore a new aspect. At that time he only had a few lovely pictures of simple Nature to offer ; now he had startling novelties—recondite, extraordinary things,—new views of Nature—some people might even pronounce them *unnatural*. So much the better.

He took an exhibition-room, the largest and best lighted one he could find; arranged his sketches on the walls; worked at them incessantly for a week; borrowed money of his landlord; and finally sent a note to Aurelia's uncle, informing him that he had implicitly followed his advice, and had now a set of pictures to exhibit, such as the eye of man had never before beheld!

Our Artist walked up and down the room, looking at the pictures on each side, and often venting a deep short sigh. No doubt he felt very anxious. In about an hour the philosopher of "The world as it is, and must remain" drove up to the door. The Artist ran and looked out of the window,—saw the well-known barouche, but Aurelia was not in it. The dreaded Uncle came heavily

up the stairs, and entered the exhibition-room.

“Now, young gentleman,” said he, brusquely, as the Artist advanced to meet him, “don’t run away with the notion that extravagance and eccentricity are the same thing as original genius. No, sir, they are wide asunder as the poles. I fear, by the note you have sent me, that so far from following my counsel you have totally mistaken my meaning. You know I said to you, follow Nature—avoid everything like caricature or whimsicality—be simple ;—think ” (here he raised his emerald-headed cane between a thumb and finger, and continued to drop the ferule perpendicularly upon the floor, thus giving a dotted emphasis to each reminiscence)—“think of the *average* intellect of the public ; do not paint for intellec-

tual exceptions. I told you, if you remember, that the public would never patronize monstrosities; that it was unquestionably a very good thing to adopt a little something rather newish, and not too common; but although people might run after oddities for a time, they never gave a *continued* patronage to anything that was not suited to their own habits, and ordinary course of thought. A low standard, no doubt, in many respects; but so it is. Perhaps I did not use those words exactly; but that was what I intended to convey."

The Poor Artist sank down in a chair. He saw it was all over with him.

The Uncle then began to walk about the room, giving an unwilling glance now and then at a picture, and recommending the study of simplicity.

The Artist continued to sit without word or motion, having given himself up for lost.

The Uncle gradually seemed to become uncomfortable, as though he did not know in what way he could decently leave the room. At last he muttered something more about simplicity and natural objects, and began to quote from Wordsworth's "Evening Walk."

"How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue !
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood ;
There, objects——"

"Sir!" exclaimed the Artist,—suddenly jumping up, as though human nature's powers of endurance had passed their limit,—“Sir!” cried he, “I am ashamed of your mental shuffling! I care nothing for your objects, nor your simplicity—nor

for Mr. Wordsworth—nor for you yourself—nor for your wealth—nor for your patronage—nor for your detestable, pragmatical, double-dealing advice !”

As our enraged Artist concluded this, he threw himself desperately upon the confounded Uncle, and thrust him out of the room before he well knew what was happening to him. Having performed this feat, our unfortunate friend locked the door of his exhibition-room, and strode up and down, and across, with a lion-like air, and feeling extremely refreshed, exhilarated, independent, and defying.

“ Ah !” said he, “ the material, the physical, the forcible,—*that* everybody understands, and its occasional use does excellent service.”

Full of these very material impressions he placed his easel near one of the win-

dows, as soon as he had cooled down a little, arranged his last bit of canvas, and almost without design commenced a bold landscape sketch. He dashed in a bright sky, and vigorous landscape for the background of a picture which he felt would be executed with a master's hand. What should he place in the foreground? Something, strong, massive, solid. He suddenly bethought him of the prize-ox and the brick-kiln, and smiled to himself at the exactness with which they presented themselves to his memory. No less truthfully did they appear on his canvas. He only left his work to send out the announcements of his exhibition, which he had previously written, and then returned to his ox-picture.

Gradually, however, the sense of the consequences attached to his recent vio-

lence, and the precarious position he was in, came over him, and he pushed the easel up into a corner. Aurelia was, in all probability, lost to him for ever. He was a ruined man—a hopeless lover.

But he had been a ruined man long ago, and was used to it. Yes,—it was not *that* which he felt so very bitterly, but that his success in the world had been made the condition of his having some chance of possessing Aurelia; and now the man to whom he had naturally and reasonably looked for approval and assistance, had most inconsistently and unaccountably turned against him.

As the evening began to close in, our Artist became more and more despairing of the results of the exhibition, which he had announced would open next Wednesday. He was sitting in one of the

window-seats "the picture of misery," when a lady was announced. It was Aurelia's grandmamma.

The Old Lady informed him that she had called in consequence of his announcement — everybody was talking of it — pictures made of One Object as viewed by Seven Eyesights! ingenious thought — original fancy — very praiseworthy, &c.

Our friend should only have announced pictures of *six* eye-sights; but he had unconsciously included himself. In the end, however, this proved right enough.

"Oh here they are, I suppose!" proceeded the Old Lady, putting on her spectacles, and beginning to scrutinize the dusky walls.

The Artist, not well knowing what to say or do for the best, apologized for

the absence of the sun, and followed the old lady with a candle.

“Ah, yes, very pretty,” said she, as she moved along from one to the other. “This, I suppose, is what you imagined the Fly to see,—very pretty! and this was what the Owl saw—very charming! this, no doubt, was the Frog’s picture—ah, all very pretty!—very clever!—What may be the price of the collection?”

The Artist stood silent with surprise.

“What is the price, I say, of the whole collection? I am delighted with them,” pursued the Old Lady, sheathing her spectacles; “and I mean to purchase them all. Well, what do you say? Here are two hundred guineas for the collection. Well?”

The Poor Artist was overjoyed; he could scarcely think he heard or saw

correctly. And after the Uncle's behaviour to him—and his to the Uncle! What did it all mean?

“Well?” pursued the Old Lady. “Why don't you answer? But you accept my offer, no doubt, and I desire the collection to be packed up and sent off to my solicitor—to a friend of mine, I should say—to-morrow morning.”

“To-morrow!” exclaimed the Artist, waking up. “But I have announced to-morrow as the first day of my exhibition: and, you see, my dear madam”—here he began to brush up his faculties a little—“you see, it is very unusual in the purchaser of a picture, when it is just about to be exhibited, to take it away on the instant. This, you know, is hardly fair towards the artist.”

“Those are my terms, sir,” said the

Old Lady, with an impatient air; “and I must add, moreover, that I should also require you to leave the town the same day. If you agree to this, I don’t care if I give two hundred and fifty guineas for the collection.”

Our Artist was much perplexed by all this. He began to have uncomfortable misgivings, and turning short upon the Old Lady, begged most earnestly to inquire after her fair grand-daughter. At this, the Old Lady’s countenance became very angry; and with an abrupt and evasive reply, she told him he should have till nine o’clock the next morning to consider her proposal. She then bustled off in a considerable state of nervous dissatisfaction.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXHIBITION-DAY. — THE BRIBE INCREASED FOR THE SALE
OF A HEART.—RESULTS OF FOUR DAYS' EXHIBITION.

“VERY strange!” mused the Artist as he sat alone in the middle of his exhibition-room, with a puzzled, yet somewhat a pleased face — “Very strange! — but two hundred and fifty guineas! what a capital beginning! The public curiosity is excited — the news has spread — my sketches are worth money already — and I shall marry — ah, there’s some difficulty left for me in that matter, no doubt. Uncle and Grandmamma both opposed, and wishing me away.”

Not at all knowing how to act for the best, he went to bed, and dreamed all night of Aurelia, and palaces of Art. He awoke early, and still undetermined. The money was a great temptation to him, not for itself, but because he thought it would give him the means of making a fair start in the world, and by becoming a man with a name, wealth would follow, and he might hope to obtain Aurelia, and they would care nothing about losing her Uncle's fortune.

His exhibition had been announced to open at ten o'clock. He was to decide on the old lady's proposal by nine. He paced up and down his exhibition-room, fervently praying that some good genius would inspire him to act for the best, as he really could not see. He had suffered so much from the want of money, that

it appeared to him if he could obtain the sum offered, he might afterwards do anything he pleased. He thus continued to walk up and down, till the clock struck nine. He took his breath gladly. He was now relieved from further consideration. It was too late to accept the proposal; so, *now* for the public!

At a quarter past nine, who should walk into the room but the formidable Uncle. He carried his emerald-headed cane with a rather imposing, almost threatening air, on his shoulder.

"Young gentleman," said he, "I am not come to punish or reprove you for your mad behaviour yesterday. I know how to make excuses for inexperience and folly. I am a philosopher of 'The world as it is, and must remain'—and I

come to deal with you in a plain, handsome, and intelligible way."

The Artist bowed, with rather a constrained and doubting air.

"Now you come to this town," pursued the Uncle, "with a collection of eccentricities in Art, as I see by your public announcement; by these you expect to get into notice, make money, and so forth."

"And ultimately have the happiness of offering my hand—" interposed the Artist, but he was abruptly interrupted by the loud voice of the Uncle.

"Make money, and *so forth!*" shouted he. "Very well. Money, and so forth. Now then, suppose we come to terms at once. A certain lady last night made you an offer for your collection, and your departure from this town. Women,

in general, are bad hands at business. I shall make you a far better and more conclusive offer."

"Give me leave, sir, to ask one question," said the Artist. "Does your niece approve or know of this proposal?"

"I do not come here to answer questions," ejaculated the Uncle, "but to make you a proposal—one which no man in his senses would dream of refusing under your circumstances. It is this. Pack up your collection of sketches immediately. Affix a placard with the word 'Sold,' to your outer door. Leave this town directly, and never return to it, or write to any soul in this place, and here is a cheque for £500."

"And Aurelia?" stammered the Artist.

"You will at once and for ever renounce all further thoughts of her," ex-

claimed the Uncle. "Now, sir, do you understand me?" So saying, he produced from his waistcoat pocket, a cheque for £500,—and from the pocket in his skirts, a large placard bearing the word "Sold."

"Sir," said our Poor Artist, "I *do* understand you now, and I answer without a moment's hesitation that my feelings are not to be bought or sold, and I decline your proposal."

The philosopher of the unprogressive world was not a little astonished at this reply, and not a little wroth. He made several attempts, now at intimidation, now at persuasion, but, finding all in vain, he hurried stormily down stairs as the clock struck ten; and, on the street-door being opened, he met a crowd coming to the Exhibition of "Seven Eye-sights and One Object!"

It happened to be election-time in the county, and the town was thronged with visitors, all seeking amusement, as the contest had just been decided. A great many people came to see the exhibition. They could make very little out of it, so far as the "theory" was concerned, but they laughed at the whimsicality of some of the sketches, and others they thought would have made very pretty landscapes if they had not been spoiled by the "Bee," which they said the Artist "had got in his bonnet." When he endeavoured to *explain*, some of the visitors even went so far as to nudge each other's elbows, touch their foreheads, and move away, suppressing a laugh, while some, it must be confessed, laughed outright. One hot-looking old gentleman, in bear-skin gloves, and a bird's-eye waistcoat, said

it was an "imposition," and demanded his shilling to be returned, which he accordingly received at the door.

The second day a good many visitors came, though not so many as the first day ; but there were more objectors, and five of them demanded their money back again.

On the third day not a soul appeared the whole morning. In the afternoon a very old woman came creeping in, who made her way towards the Artist and began a sad and feeble murmur about her bad sight, and her "glasses," and the great affliction it was to lose one's eyes ; from all which the forlorn Artist gradually collected that she had fancied, or been informed, that he was a sort of quack or conjuring gentleman, who could restore decayed eye-sights.

Having led her out kindly by the hand,

and left her murmuring after him her expectations and bewilderments, our ill-starred Artist returned to his exhibition-room in a state bordering on despair. He saw nothing but utter ruin before him, where he had so recently anticipated the highest success. Fortune, fame, love—all were lost! He clasped his hands over his forehead, then raised them in the air, and stood fixed in this attitude of mental anguish. A looking-glass chanced to be near him, in which he presently observed his own despairing figure. He gazed at it with a self-pitying emotion, but, nevertheless, with an "artist's eye,"—for we cannot help these speculations on ourselves. He moved with a desponding air to his easel, and found a melancholy pleasure in making a sketch of the wretched object he had just seen.

On the fourth day nobody came the whole morning. "Of course they will not," said the Artist as he sat at his own picture of despair; "of course it is all finished with me." He pushed the easel up into a corner, and, as if to hide his own wretched face from himself, he turned the sketch to the wall, and placed over it, with a bitter smile, the sketch of the prize ox, and the brick-kiln.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW MEMBER.—AN UNEXPECTED HIT.—GOLDEN OFFERS
AND LADIES' SMILES.—THE ARTIST MEDITATES A GRAND
CARTOON.

It now wanted only a quarter of an hour to the time of closing, and the Artist was about to take his hat and rush out of the room for a lonely walk over the suburbs and its dusky fields, when a loud clamour of voices suddenly broke upon the hollow hall below, and the clattering of many feet upon the stairs was heard. It was the New Member for the County, with several fashionable friends and a large party of ladies, who all came laughing and flirt-

ing into the room, and went hopping and chattering along the walls, every one of them speaking and giggling at the same moment, so that the room seemed quite filled with them. Our Artist wisely avoided as much as possible all attempts at explanation, but he was obliged to reply to a few questions concerning the different eye-sights. He did this with much earnestness and precision, at which they all laughed immoderately, regarding it as a fine piece of dry humour.

“Capital!” exclaimed the New Member; “it is really very amusing. But, sir, joking apart,—for all is fair at election time,—you know how to paint, I see. I should like to become the purchaser of one of your sketches. And if you do not like to break the set, why paint me a copy of it.”

"Which do you mean, sir?" inquired the Artist.

"That one in the corner," replied the New Member, pointing to the sketch of the prize ox and the brick-field. "That is a very pretty piece of real nature. I shall be happy to give fifty guineas for it, if you will accept them."

The Artist, in amazement, bowed confusedly.

"Why!" exclaimed one of the gentlemen present, who was a great cattle-breeder; "it's my Stall-burster, that won the prize at the cattle-show last week! Yes; *that* it is! And wonderfully like!"

Everybody crowded—ladies and all—squeezing and jiggling round about, to have a look at Sir Charles's "Stall-burster;" and very much delighted everybody seemed to be, and no doubt really

was. The New Member shook our Artist by the hand; so did Sir Charles,—and offered him a similar sum to make another picture of “Stall-burster,” for which purpose he invited our friend to come and spend a week at his house, directly his exhibition closed. The New Member also invited him,—the ladies smiled upon him,—he felt that his fortune was made!

But his exhibition — his newly discovered wonders of vision — his illustrations of Natural History—now, for the first time, offered to the examination of a discerning public! What was to be done with these extraordinary, interesting, and instructive sketches? Since the public took no interest in theories of vision, and would not come to see them, it was manifest that his only sensible course was to

pack them up, and prepare to follow his fortune in the country, forthwith. Such were his thoughts one night.

As he sat at breakfast next morning, having risen late, and his mind being full of aërial castles and Aurelia, he heard a loud hum and buzz of voices below, and was speedily informed that a crowd had arrived to visit his exhibition. The affair of last night had got wind over the town, and a number of visitors thronged his rooms throughout the day. His picture of "Stall-burster" did him immortal honour. That was the general opinion. As for the other pictures, they were whimsical enough, and the theory the Artist entertained about eye-sights was extremely amusing, so far as it was at all intelligible. The curiosity, however, seemed to increase, or at least so the

Artist thought, and, be this as it might, his exhibition-room had a crowd of visitors every day.

He was not a little surprised; nevertheless he was prudent enough to foresee that this was not likely to last long. He therefore resolved on adding another picture to his exhibition, of a kind which should carry on the excitement till his new friends departed for their several seats, where he was to visit them.

Invoking the spirit of Aurelia to assist his labours, with a fervency worthy of a knight-errant, our Artist presently covered the whole wall on one side of an adjoining room with cartridge paper. While this was drying he employed every hour in making designs, till at length being satisfied, he collected all his fragments into a whole in his mind, made

his final outline in a rough draught, and then went to work at a great cartoon.

The picture he meditated was one which should embody the most practical part of his recent novel experiences, and bring them to bear on the general understanding in a far more definite form than could be reasonably expected from any of the pictures derived from the descriptions of his friends in the wood.

As the principal object of the foreground, he took the sketch he had made from himself, when in a state of despair, at the apparent ruin of all his hopes; and this figure he placed on the brink of a precipice. Beneath it rolled a dark sea, occupying the whole of the lower fore-ground, or base of the picture. Behind the figure were seen orchards with fruit-trees heavily laden, and of deep

golden hues ; herein bearing in mind the garden of the Hesperides, suggested by a part of the description of the Bee. On one side of these orchards slept a clear soft lake, wherein the fruit-trees, clouds, and other objects were dreamily reflected. He owed this thought to the Fish. Beyond the lake rose a gentle green sweep of land, on the upper ridge of which ran a streak of red gravel, whereon was seen a faction-fight of the most desperate kind, as induced by an election contest. This he derived from the description given him by the Ant. In the remote distance he placed a village spire, surmounted by a cross, induced by certain reflections on the many trials of this life, with man's hopes beyond ; not, however, without sundry passing emotions and joyous hopes with re-

gard to a "heaven upon earth," associated with his thoughts of Aurelia. The clouds above and the sky, together with a brilliant effect of the sun's rays, he sketched in chiefly from the description of the Robin. He considered for some time as to what he could introduce which should represent the subtle speculations of the Spider; but finally abandoned all idea of attempting things intensely interwoven with the most complex phenomena of life and perception. Without intending it, however, he unavoidably did this, in the very design he was thus projecting. As for the *Cat*, he left her influence to be represented by the amount of utter indifference to his picture which was certain to be displayed by a sufficient number of the visitors.

At this cartoon he worked night and

day, on the plan of broad effects, but with a sufficient attention to the details to avoid all slovenliness. It was a bold style, and the work did his heart good. Besides, people still continued to visit his exhibition in order to see what the "New Member" and all the "gentry" had seen; so that our Artist hoped, before the popularity had died out, he should be able to exhibit his new picture, and so carry on his success triumphantly, till his patrons trotted off to their mansions, when he should "close for the season," and follow them.

But the name and title of this picture, what should it be? It would be finished in a few days more; he must at once announce this important addition to his exhibition. Something very striking for an advertisement was necessary; something

quite irresistible, if possible. He even passed a sleepless night in a struggle with himself as to whether he should adopt a *small* degree of "humbug." He had endured so many disappointments that he was in a nervous apprehension lest he might lose all his present advantages. The genuine thing always succeeded in the *very* long run; but it appeared to him that those who, besides doing a genuine thing added a little "humbug," considerably shortened the preliminary period. So, our perplexed friend lay in a most restless state, turning over in his mind the indefinite degree of charlatantry which it might be wise to adopt; till, being perfectly unable to determine upon what amount would be sufficient, and at the same time reconcilable to his conscience, which was clear up to

this point, of any such tricks, he finally sank to sleep, abandoning the idea as beyond his capacity. On awaking, he therefore resolved to announce his new picture,—not as “Mundane Martyrdom of the Æsthetic Devotee,” nor as the “Soul and Precipice Exacerbation,” but simply as “Private Experience of an Artist.”

The New Member came next morning, and promised him that he would bring a large party on the first day of his new picture being exhibited. Sir Charles, also, and several others, made inquiries, and the Artist fancied that different parties of ladies all looked up very hard at his windows, as they drove by in elegant open carriages. So our friend worked away incessantly, and the cartoon was soon completed.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT CARTOON.—THE ARTIST IS, IN SOME SORT, EDIFIED BY THE OPINIONS OF VISITORS.

ON the first day of opening his great picture to the public, the Artist naturally expected a great concourse of visitors; but the New Member had suddenly driven off a few miles into the country, on a trout-fishing excursion, and most of our friend's other patrons were engaged at a cock-fight which had been privately got up by Sir Charles, in the "subscription ball-room" of the town. Nevertheless, the promise of the New Member to come with

a party of dashing people, had been loudly noised abroad, and a good sprinkling of visitors presented themselves in the course of the morning. They were, for the most part, interested in his new picture, as much as one usually sees the public interested in such things, and several even sought to comprehend the individual history of mind and circumstance he had portrayed. But if the Artist was disappointed in the degree of comprehension that was elicited, he was yet more surprised at the variety of it in kind ; in fact, many people seemed to comprehend things which he had never intended, or which were the direct opposite of what he had intended.

“There!” said a gentleman, addressing a young lady on his arm, “you see how finely the Artist tells his story of disappointed love. He turns his back

upon the beautiful world—he no longer cares for anything it contains—he is glad to leave it behind him, and leap into the dark flood for ever.”

“Look, Master Townsend!” said a school-master to one of his favourite boarders, “there is an example of proud ambition: it climbs up to a precipice only to fall. Proud ambition leads to suicide. A moral lesson, you observe, and a good copy for small hand.”

A farmer lamented the great waste of fields in grass, which would grow corn so well on one side, and be just the thing for turnips lower down. A market gardener, close behind him, made objections to the same effect:—“Peas, beans, early cabbages, and lettuces, for the spring; summer vegetables, in course; and celery, beet-root, endive, and salsify, for winter

stock,—all lost to the market* for want of a head-piece in the owner of the estate ;” touching his own forehead with a grave and conceited look as he spoke.

“I say, young gentleman !” said a fox-hunter, who was looking up at the principal figure, “if you don’t mind your *eye*, you’ll go neck and heels over into the water.”

A rich grocer, who had recently bought a large house with “grounds,” remarked to his friend, the churchwarden, that the picture was intended to represent the dissatisfied nature of man. “There,” said he, “is the owner of as fine a piece of land as need be wished ; he is surrounded by all the good things of this world, and yet you see his mind is bent on something beyond !”

“It is meant to represent atheism,”

replied the churchwarden; "the fat of the land is his, but the church is a long way off. You can scarcely see it. What does *he* care?"

A physician discoursed with a friend on the morbid condition of mind displayed in the whole countenance and attitude of the principal figure, and speculated learnedly on the character and extent of functional—perhaps even of organic derangement which he exhibited, together with the treatment proper to be adopted. His friend suggested that perhaps a pound and a half of rump steak, and a bottle of porter, might be advisable; to which the physician, with a certain grave humour, acceded, with the proviso that the patient in question should first walk fifteen miles across the country. So they passed into a discussion on the state of the weather,

and thence to the aspect of affairs in the political horizon of Europe.

The whole attention of one gentleman was occupied by a strange face which he "made out" in the clouds, closely resembling the Turkish ambassador; a lady who was with him did nothing but object to the mediocre character of the frame, and speculate on what sort of frame a picture of that kind ought to have had, to give it any fair chance of attention. It was curious to observe how very few people paid any serious regard to the title given by the Artist, as though they were all determined not to attempt to see it with *his* eyes, nor from the same point of view. "Experience of an Artist!" said one; "he means no such thing;—what he really means is the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" "Or the return of the

Prodigal Son," said another. "It is Eugene Aram;" — "It is Sir Walter Raleigh;" — "It is Rubens, before he could paint;" — these, and other such things, were said.

A short, portly, poppy-nosed inn-keeper was there, with his still shorter and fatter wife; and they were accompanied by a large-limbed smiling butcher, who wore a satin waistcoat with an egg-plum pattern, embroidered with silver sprigs between each plum. The inn-keeper joked about a "marquee in them fields:" his wife said she wished the poor gentleman (meaning the principal figure) had something better to do than to make faces up at the clouds; *she'd* soon teach him different, *she* knew. The butcher merely noticed what nice meadows there were for feeding cattle, or to play the flute in among

the buttercups after a hard day's work in a *very* different place.

A party of respectable tradesmen were divided in opinion; some of them seeming to regard the picture as the scene of a shipwrecked man, who had climbed up a rock and was calling out for help; some thought it was an insane patient who had got loose from his keepers; while others, being rather jocosely inclined, suggested that it was only a stuffed figure set up to frighten away the birds;—whereupon they all laughed, and agreed to adjourn to a tumbler of rum-and-water, and a pipe.

Several manufacturers, having taken a holyday on the occasion of the recent election (in which they had disposed advantageously of their votes), came straying into the room, in hopes of some amusement. Finding it was only pictures,

they presently departed with a resentful glance around the room, and in dogged silence, with the exception of a japanner, who addressed a brassfounder and a fire-brick maker on the shameful want of varnish, or other polishing, on all the pictures. They were nothing but a take-in, that was *his* opinion, and he *ought* to know something of the arts of design, after having been a japanner and tin-plate worker these last eighteen years, and more.

Two artists stood before the picture a considerable time, discoursing on its design, composition, drawing, colouring—a doubtful light here—a wrong shade there—an awkward foreshortening in this place—an illegitimate perspective in that place—a pretty bit here—an effective bit there—a bold sort of thing altogether.

One often wonders why individuals, whose whole minds are engrossed by some especial subject of a totally different kind, should wander into a picture-gallery; unless, indeed, the studious quietude of the porch and entrance-door attracts them from the noisy bustle of the street. Such an individual was among the number who paused in front of the cartoon,—and with his countenance earnestly uplifted towards that of the principal figure standing on the precipice, (whom, most certainly, his *mind* did not see) he thus, in an undertone, addressed it in the plural number:—

“Gentlemen! The process which I recommend in this concluding lecture, has been much discussed by various learned anatomists and operators, and is open, I am aware, to some objections. But, until those who oppose me are able to demon-

strate that the vitreous humour can endure a rent or an incision without injury—that the *sclerotica*, ciliary zone, choroid, or the retina itself, may as safely be punctured as the cornea, I *must* persist in regarding the anterior operation for the solution of cataract as the triumph of ophthalmic surgery. As for the ‘modus operandi,’ you will softly, but firmly, plant the thumb of your left hand under the patient’s eye,—displace the upper and lower lids by an elegant movement of the tips of the fore and middle fingers,—and then exhibit your needle in the other hand!”

CHAPTER XVII.

CRITICISMS, REMARKS, AND IMPRESSIONS OF A PHILOSOPHER,
AN EDITOR, A LAWYER, A SOLDIER, A SCHOOL-BOY, AND
A SAILOR.

BUT the group that most excited the feelings of our friend, was comprised of six individuals who came together into the room, and after wandering about from picture to picture, assembled together in front of his Cartoon. A by-stander informed him who they were. That grey-headed, grave-looking personage, said he, is a literary man, a philosopher, and mathematician. He is chairman of the Archæological Society, recently formed in

this town, and comprising already two members and an honorary secretary. The young man in the stiff black stock, with the neat waist, is his nephew, a lieutenant of infantry. The rosy-cheeked schoolboy with the bright double row of silver sugar-loaf buttons on his jacket, is his grandson. The short stout figure in the brown surtout, with black bushy eye-brows and dark tortoise-shell spectacles, is the editor and principal proprietor of the chief provincial newspaper; he is also the founder of several Industrial Schools. The tall, thin gentleman in the long Oxford-mixture frock coat, with brown rappee trowsers, and lundyfoot waistcoat, is a wealthy lawyer in great practice. The youthful sailor by his side is his youngest son. All the party are to dine at the lawyer's house to-day, as he

wishes to interest the philosopher and his friend the editor, in a certain parochial business he has in hand for the vicar.

This group had now formed themselves in a compact phalanx before the grand Cartoon. They were in conversation about it. The Artist could not refrain from drawing near, and began to examine the pattern of the paper on the wall very earnestly, and often holding his breath.

“The design,” said the grave Philosopher, who was listened to with marked respect by all the semicircle, “is of a peculiar kind. The Artist has evidently taken his own private feelings and position in life as the basis of his picture. He has *not* represented surrounding objects as harmonizing with those feelings and that position, but as displaying themselves independently. We see this in Nature.

At the same time he has sought to make his picture harmonious as a whole, by means of form and colour, so that Art and Nature, though held distinct intellectually, should not clash in their pictorial manifestations. The Artist, I have no doubt, has intended this for a visible solution of an æsthetical problem on the involuntary antagonism which exists in society between the creative faculty and those who enjoy its fruits."

Our Artist pressed his forehead with a somewhat troubled air. Had he intended anything so profound? so subtle? He began to think he was once more listening to the complex reasonings of the Spider.

"It rather appears to me," said the Editor, "like the effort of a man of genius to embody certain original ideas,

which do not properly come within the limit of his art."

"Except inasmuch as their novelty may produce money," interposed the Man of Law.

The Philosopher and the Editor exchanged looks at this remark, and not of the most complimentary kind towards the last speaker.

"Well, Lieutenant," said the Editor, turning to the Infantry officer, as if to change the tone of the discussion, "how do *you* like this much-talked-of picture?"

"Not at all," laughed the Officer, with a slashing movement of his right arm across the air in front of the picture. "It is too full of meaning for me. Not that I should have known there was any meaning in it, if I had not heard what has just been said by my uncle and by

you. But there *is* one part of it that takes my fancy. The fight up there. It is done," (proceeded he, half in jest,) "in right excellent style. Carts and carriages are smashed—horses upset, and lying on their backs, kicking—men knocked down and trampled under foot in a way to make one's blood leap again—and all the ground red with the blood" (it was only red gravel) "of the combatants, some of whom I see rolling on the ground and tugging and tearing each other by the hair and ears. *That's* something like an interesting picture! I only wish the painter would let me cut that small slice out of his canvas."

"What a man!" murmured the Artist to himself. He could not help thinking of Captain Mandible, and his cry of "charge!"

"A most immoral and soldierly wish,"

observed the Editor in a tone of good-humoured reproof.

All this time, the little rosy-cheeked Schoolboy had been standing with the roundest, blackest, and brightest pair of eyes in the world, staring at the Cartoon, in a sort of ecstasy of delight. He could contain himself no longer.

“Oh what a beautiful shining sky!” cried he with a jerk at the hand of the young Sailor who stood next to him; “what a bright happy day to be out in the fields, running, and hopping, and scampering, and scrambling through the grass, and over the hedges and gates, and ditches and stiles, and narrow planks, across sunshiny rivulets and flood-streams—shouldn’t you like that?—we could sail paper boats there,—and *couldn’t* we pick daisies and daffodils, and lilies-of-the-val-

ley, with white bind-weed flowers, to go round our hats, and pink ragged-robin for the button-holes! Oh, *my* eye! *do* you see those apples in the gardens there, all with scarlet and crimson cheeks?—and *do* you see, besides, all the great golden pippins!—that long green meadow there! the heaps of clouds all of grey and silver fire and fancy above it,—and the rainbow above the clouds,—and the rays of light above the rainbow,—and the wide, wide clear blue sky above all that, going away to heaven somewhere? *What* a place to fly a kite in! Oh, *my* eye!"

This burst of schoolboy ecstasy produced considerable merriment in the group, and among all the other visitors within hearing; but the Editor could not forbear remarking, with a restrained smile, that the picture contained suggestions to an

industrious spirit of more importance than red-cheeked apples, or high-soaring kites.

“Don’t think so,” said the Lieutenant.

As for the young Sailor, he gave his opinion, with his hands in his jacket-pockets, that the Artist had had Alexander Selkirk in his mind, after the boat he got ashore in had been lost in the dark sea running below the rock there. He then began to remark in a lounging, fragmentary way, on the extraordinary clearness and completeness of the reflections of the orchards and other trees in the lake; speculating, half to himself, and half to nobody in particular, as to its probable number of fathoms deep,—if it were fed chiefly by rains from the hills and high-lands, or from springs—how it lay as to the winds—what sort of fish it contained, and whether

its peculiar tone of colour in some of the shady places denoted that it was impregnated with metals or minerals, whether it had an under-current,—whether on a hot day it would be as pleasant to swim in as it looked to be,—whether, if you drank a good draught of it you would be poisoned, or only physicked, or sent to sleep; and whether, if you went to sleep in a boat there, you would not float away somewhere, so that when you awoke you would be likely to find yourself very much out of your latitude! He smiled to himself as he said this, adding, with a sort of careless motion, like the yawing and rolling of a ship in a calm, with a swell at intervals, that sailors cannot choose, but must take all chances.

“Come,” said the Lawyer, who had long been showing signs of impatience; “let

us leave all these whimsical affairs, and go to something of real interest. I mean—dinner.

The young Infantry Officer laughed loudly at this; the Schoolboy laughed because he heard a laugh; the young Sailor echoed it, by way of seeming jovial.

The Editor acquiesced politely, like a man of the world; at the same time he thought it right to observe that he trusted his friend did not mean to infer that a man's real interests were confined to the table or the pocket.

"His *real* interests," interposed the Philosopher, "are more in the ideal than the tangible."

"Good heavens, sir!" exclaimed the Lawyer. "A contradiction in terms!"

"Yes," pursued the other: "what is

your balance at your banker's but an idea?"

"Until I draw a cheque," rejoined the other with a decisive air.

"But you are not doing this all day," said the Logician: "nor half the day,—nor during one hour in the twelve;—so that the ideal has the advantage over the real, as eleven is to a fraction."

The Editor took the arm of the Philosopher with a pleased look, and they followed the Lawyer mechanically as he strutted out; the expression of his back (to a learned eye) denoting that he was pluming himself inwardly on the consciousness that he had a very *large* balance at his banker's.

"Well!" said our Artist to himself, taking a long breath; "it is certainly very plain that there is almost as much

difference in the eyesight of these six people in looking at the same object, as there was between the Spider, the Bee, the Cat, the Ant, the Robin, and the Fish.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLEAR CASE OF THE DIFFERENCE OF EYE-SIGHTS.—WHITE
ROSES FROM AURELIA.—A RUN OF BUSINESS.—THE ARTIST
MAKES A NAME.—HE SUCCEEDS IN ALL HIS HIGHEST
HOPES OF FAME AND LOVE.

THE Artist paced thoughtfully up and down the room after all the visitors had departed.

“Yes!” ejaculated he, “I feel persuaded that scarcely any two individuals, even of the same species, see the same thing alike. At any rate, it is evident that this is the case with the human species. Whether this infinite variety be caused by some degree of difference in the organs of sight, or in the respective minds, or by both

those causes, the *fact* of the difference is demonstrable: and not only in the present instance, but the more one thinks of it, the more one sees this throughout the affairs of life on any *special* occasion which brings the question to the test. In general, there is (very fortunately) no need to examine the difference, and we find it convenient, if not almost necessary, to agree, in order to let the affairs of life proceed with some show of a mutual understanding: especially as we always take it for granted, *so long as we are let alone*, that everybody sees a thing just as we see it."

Our friend retired to rest that night in a very philosophical and perplexed state of mind; and if his theory of vision could derive any benefit from a pair of eyes staring into the darkness till day-break, he at least gained that aching ad-

dition of "spangly gloom" (which he watched "dancing up and down," as Keats describes it,) to his previous experience and speculations. But when he arose and entered his breakfast-room, debating with himself how much longer he should keep his exhibition open, he descried something lying upon the table, which gave a rapid turn to the cross currents of his thoughts, and sent them all off in a direct line to the green lawns and woods of his patrons,—but not so much "on business," as on something better.

On his breakfast-table lay a lovely bouquet of white roses:—the Tea-rose, the Blush-hip, the Celestial, the Angelique, the Queen of Denmark, la Jeune Bergère, the Maiden's Blush, and the White Moss-rose. On a folded paper band that held them together, was written "Bower's

Court." It was the name of an estate contiguous to that of his patron, the New Member,—and the handwriting was that of Aurelia.

He buried his face amidst the roses, and inhaled the delicious perfume again and again, while images thronged in his mind, among which the roses, lovely as they were, undoubtedly played only a subordinate or typical part. He closed his exhibition, and that same evening he started for the delightful seat of the New Member.

The house was full of visitors. The Artist was soon set to work; it was quite a harvest for his pencil. "Animals" were the things chiefly required of him; and on the proverbial principle of "follow your luck," he refused no biped nor quadruped. He painted all the favourite

horses, ponies, and dogs of the nobility and gentry for twenty miles round; besides parks with deer, lawns with peacocks, lakes with swans, uplands with sheep, oxen (of course) at plough, or looking at you with honest old faces,—and forests with hunters of the fox and the stag, and all their delightful “musical” packs of yelling hounds. He became quite famous; he had “made a name!”

But among all these invitations to the seats of the rich county families around, was there none from Bower’s Court, whose sweet recesses, of all places in the world, he wished to penetrate. No, he could not manage that; he had soon ascertained that Aurelia and her Grandmamma were there; but the old lady had no desire to see him. No more painting of “green-houses.” The New Member, however,

often dined there. This rather troubled the Artist; and he trembled. In vain he rode over to the woods adjoining Bower's Court, and haunted the neighbourhood in hopes of meeting Aurelia on a ramble. She was too closely watched.

Fortune, however, favoured him at last, for the New Member gave a great "ball and supper," to which everybody of note or position in the county was invited. The old lady accordingly came among the rest, — and with her, Aurelia. She looked more lovely than ever. The Artist's heart thumped against his side most painfully, as he bowed, and ventured to remark that it had been a fine day for their drive across the country.

"A fine day, indeed!" exclaimed a fox-hunter at his elbow, "why, it has rained all the way!"

The Artist begged pardon with a crimson cheek. But if his heart had thumped at his side on meeting the object of his love, how much more rapidly did it beat, and with far less joyous emotions when he saw the new M. P. advance and take her by the hand, and pay her compliments and attentions, while the old lady smiled, and seconded him in all sorts of old ways.

This was occasionally repeated till dancing began, when the Artist, unable to endure his suspense any longer, took his patron aside, and, in a hurried voice, began to tell him his whole story.

The New Member interrupted him. He knew it all. Aurelia had told him, on observing the design of her Uncle. He was their friend. Oh joy! yes, he had been managing matters for them,

and now he offered to lead her out to dance, and give her up to her lover as having a prior claim to her hand. All this was done. It answered to admiration. The old lady abandoned herself to her snuff-box, and the lovers danced together, then vanished away somewhere among the shrubberies and conservatories, and finally they sat beside each other at supper.

How natural and inevitable all this now appeared ! How should it have been otherwise ? What could withstand so much sincere affection, and how could any event be too happy for the expectations of so fortunate an Artist—one, who had made such “ a name ! ”

Not to make a long story of a short one, our friend pursued the advantages of this delicious day ; and in the course

of a few months was married to Aurelia. Yes, how should he fail — a fortunate Artist of his name and connexions? As for her loss of fortune from her Uncle by marrying him,—pooh!

They passed the honey-moon at a pretty farm-house in the neighbourhood of the lovely wood where our first acquaintance was made with the Poor Artist. The house belonged to the farmer who had been burnt out of his former home, and was a present from the Artist a few weeks before his marriage.

Aurelia's Uncle had returned into Wales some time since. He had never recovered the vexation of having failed in his project of effecting a union between his niece and the New Member. Besides which, he was enraged with Aurelia for having declared that she preferred the

Poor Artist to all other men in the world, and would marry him, or no one.

The discomfited philosopher of the world took, therefore, to breeding sheep; employing his leisure hours in learning the violoncello, and endeavouring to improve the somewhat deficient psalmody of the little church of Pwyll-y-pont-garog.

CONCLUSION.

THE RICH AND HAPPY ARTIST REMAINS TRUE TO HIS NEWLY-DISCOVERED PRINCIPLES OF EYE-SIGHT.—HIS EXPLANATION AT A DINNER-PARTY OF THE TWO GREAT THEORIES, DISENCUMBERED OF THE USUAL CONFUSION OF LEARNED DIFFICULTIES, IS TREATED AFTER THE PLEASANT WAY OF THE WORLD.

“Now, although you may smile,” said our rich and celebrated Artist, as he sat one day “over his wine,” at a large dinner-party, at the table of one of his county patrons,—“although you may all smile at the account I have given you of the six sketches derived from the minute observation of one object by six different eye-sights, yet I am bold to declare that they are every one of them founded upon absolute reality.

"Is it possible that you are serious?" cried his patron.

"Most serious."

"You don't say so! how *can* you make this apparent?—reality! ha! ha! ha!—pass the bottle!"

"Yes, reality:" pursued our temeritous Artist. "They are pieces of Natural History,—you may all laugh—pieces of Natural History, eccentric and extraordinary only because they have been seen through a *truer* medium than they have ever before been seen by man, and because they have never before been painted or written about."

"Ha! ha! ha! very true!" laughed the guests. "Pass the bottle!" cried the patron.

"They illustrate," pursued our Artist, emptying his glass impatiently—"they

demonstrate, that with each individual species, 'the thing *behind* the eye,' as a celebrated Eastern philosopher expresses it,—or the mind,—causes each individual of that species really to see the self-same object differently, and sometimes with a very extraordinary difference; or perhaps not to see it at all, though it lies palpable to view. I do not care for being laughed at,—it is not the first time,—but I know I am right. And I beg of you to hear the rest."

"Oh! go on,—go on, by all means," cried several voices in a state of great merriment.

"While the difference that exists," pursued the Artist, "between ocular perceptions among those of the same species, is undeniable by reason (though constantly denied in practice, because each person

is apt to make his own eyes the standard for all others), these sketches yet more forcibly illustrate and demonstrate the wonderful difference which exists between the eyes of creatures of a *different* species; whereby it seems clear,—to adopt the words of a well-known artist and mathematician,—that an external object varies with the nature of the eyes that look at it; the object is the first term, or A; the mind the third term, or C; and the peculiar eyes are the intermediate term, or X; representing and interpreting the object according to their peculiar powers. Hence it follows that THERE ARE AS MANY DIFFERENT EXTERNAL WORLDS AS THERE ARE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF EYES. ‘Visionary,’ do you call it? dreamy abstraction,—and so forth,—through all the usual common-places of Materialists,—no more

wine, I thank you,—who talk as if they scorned to have so flimsy a thing as a soul within them! Why, the solid earth is not more palpable to reason, though it may be more palpable to everyday feet and horses' hoofs."

"Yes, we do call it a dream!" boldly shouted two or three voices.

"A poetical craze!—a vision!" cried others, with taunting jocularities.

"Tally-ho!" shouted one of the fox-hunters.

"To those," exclaimed our excited friend, with a grave look, "who can eat beef-steaks heartily, and seek to know no more, the obvious facts of Nature as they *seem* and *serve*, are enough; but to those who have any anxiety to advance as far as 'permitted to us' in the study of the *miraculous* world that *surrounds* us, the

wonderful differences of the visual faculty must ever possess a profound interest."

Our Artist lost this patron soon after, together with sundry engagements which had been made with certain of the guests before dinner. He also found, in other quarters, that he was not invited so often, and that the number of his commissions for pictures was rapidly falling off. One day he received an anonymous letter, containing these words:—

"Stick to cattle and clover-fields, my boy. Be wise."

He showed it to Aurelia. She smiled, and said she thought it looked like her Uncle's hand; adding, that perhaps it *would* be as well if he did not insist so often on what he had learned from sources not easily accessible to other people.

Our friend had suffered so much in his long struggle to obtain success, that he did not altogether turn a deaf ear to his wife's counsel. Still, among his friends,—those whom he felt he “could trust,”—he continually adverted to the sketches which had illustrated, if not demonstrated,—and for the first time,—the wonderful fact in Nature, that there are as many different worlds as there are different organs of sight;—and that the Creator has thus made for each different species — an Infinity out of One set of Objects.

The End.

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